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## THE WINDS OF TIME

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LADY GORDON

*E. Macnaghton*

[Frontispiece]

# THE WINDS OF TIME

By LADY GORDON

“He has built his monument with the  
winds of time at strife.”

A. E.

LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET. W.



*First Edition . . . 1934*



TO  
C—  
MILLIONS OF MILES AWAY  
FROM THE KERRY  
HE LOVED



# CONTENTS

## PART I

HAP.		PAGE
	FOREWORD . . . . .	xi
I	EARLY DAYS . . . . .	3
II	IRELAND IN THE 'NINETIES—MARRIAGE . . . . .	10
III	LONDON—JOURNALISM—SOCIETY . . . . .	16
IV	KERRY—A HOUSE AND A BOG . . . . .	26
V	MAKING A GARDEN . . . . .	34
VI	TRAVELS—A MOTOR TOUR IN FRANCE—SICILY —INDIA—THE DURBAR—A PURDAH PARTY —“RANJI” . . . . .	39
VII	KERRY SOCIETY—THE SKELLIGS . . . . .	61
VIII	EGYPT—THE BUILDING OF ARD-NA-SIDHE— SOME KERRY FAIRIES . . . . .	71
IX	POLITICS—A NATIONALIST MEETING—THE IRISH CLUB—VICEREGAL LODGE—LLOYD GEORGE—THE NATIONAL VOLUNTEERS . . . . .	85
X	THE WAR—A TRIP TO FRANCE . . . . .	97

## PART II

XI	EASTER WEEK—MY GARDEN—VISITORS—A SCHOOL TREAT . . . . .	105
XII	MRS. DALY DISCOURSES—PUCK FAIR—KERRY WEDDINGS . . . . .	122
XIII	A QUESTION OF BUTTER—CONSCRIPTION—THE BLOCKADE OF KILLORGLIN—A RAID . . . . .	130
XIV	DUBLIN—ITS INTELLIGENTSIA—LOOKING FOR A FLAT . . . . .	138

CHAP.		PAGE
XV	BATTLE, MURDER AND SUDDEN DEATH— CHRISTMAS—A STORY OF THE BLACK AND TANS . . . . .	152
XVI	THE NEW HYGIENE—BRIDGET MARY AND MARY BRIDGET—THE BLEEDING STATUE OF TEMPLEMORE . . . . .	162
XVII	RAILWAYS — REPRISALS AND RAIDS — THE GENTRY AND THE SOUL OF IRELAND—THE TRUCE . . . . .	173
XVIII	A JOURNEY—POLITICS AND EGGS—A VISITOR— ELECTIONS—THE CIVIL WAR—MORE RAIDS	192
XIX	TERRIBLE TIMES . . . . .	209
XX	ANOTHER JOURNEY AND SOME BATTLES . . . . .	224
XXI	AN UNWELCOME DELIVERANCE . . . . .	232
XXII	COLLAPSE OF THE CIVIL WAR—COOKS AND THE FREE STATE ARMY . . . . .	241
XXIII	DE VALERA—A WORLD TOUR—CEYLON— HONG-KONG—JAPAN—VANCOUVER ISLAND —THE ROCKIES—THE C.P.R. . . . .	247
XXIV	A SAD FAREWELL—LISMORE—A MEET . . . . .	258
XXV	THE FUTURE—PATRIOTISM—A PRAYER . . . . .	265

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
LADY GORDON . . . . .	FRONTISPIECE
<i>From a photograph by E. Macnaghton</i>	
SIR JOHN POWER, BART., OF KILFANE . . . . .	6
PAVED GARDEN AT ARD-NA-SIDHE . . . . .	112
ARD-NA-SIDHE . . . . .	258





## FOREWORD

TO have any success with reminiscences in these days one must have been on terms of exceptional intimacy with Crowned Heads, statesmen and diplomats, and have been proposed to, or at least embraced, by most of the leading celebrities of the day.

Now the only Royalty I have ever met was one of our younger and more irresponsible Princes, and his conversation was far from illuminating—indeed, all I can remember of it was the adjective “bloody,” which he applied to every feature of the foreign country in which we both happened to find ourselves. My hand has never been sought in marriage by an Empire Maker, nor have I ever been made love to by an Ambassador ; while the name of the only celebrity whose embraces I still remember with confusion is one which I will never divulge. It is true I have met several authors, a certain number of politicians and even one or two poets ; but, of the immortals, the only one with whom I might have been able to claim acquaintance was Swinburne, having been taken in my youth, by a mutual friend, to his house at Putney. Unfortunately, we never got beyond the doorstep, where we were met by Mr. Watts Dunton, who informed us with deep regret that the distinguished poet was not in a suitable condition to receive a lady.

In the circumstances, whatever the eventual

fate of these memoirs may be, they are not likely to bring me into the limelight or to increase my financial stability. Nor are they written so much with that intent, as to place on record, for anyone likely to be interested, the existence of the class to which I unhappily belong—a class now almost extinct, and which, in a few more years, will have passed completely out of memory—namely, the Irish “landed gentry.”

Whether the world, or even Ireland, will be the poorer or not for our disappearance is a question which will have to be decided by our successors—the Publicans and the Republicans who are assuming our positions and our responsibilities. I imagine their verdict will be that we were a half-baked lot and not worth preserving: a point of view with which I am inclined to agree, without being at all impressed with the superiority of their own qualifications.

At any rate, it can be said of us that we went down with our backs to the wall, which, as a matter of fact, had collapsed—as walls do in Ireland—long before its owners; holding on, in spite of gunmen and incendiaries, to our dilapidated houses and our wind-swept lands with a persistence which we find it often difficult to explain.

Whether we cling to our country because we love it, or because of a natural perversity which makes us resent being turned out of it; or whether it is that we feel life anywhere else would be too dull, the fact remains that our flights from Ireland during its numerous upheavals throughout the ages have, as a rule, been of a temporary nature. We have always come back.

The discriminating reader of these pages will, I hope, not only discover why we have done so, but find in them some of the elusive charm of a

land the inhabitants of which are kept perpetually on the move and are never allowed to suffer for long from the blighting effects of established Law and Order.

EDITH GORDON.

■

Who art thou, starry ghost,  
That ridest in the air  
At head of all the host  
And art so burning eyed  
For all thy strengthlessness?  
World, I am no less  
Than she whom thou hast awaited.  
She who remade a Poland out of nothingness  
And hath created  
Ireland out of a breath of pride  
In the reed bed of despair.

HERBERT TRENCH.

■

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

IT is, I imagine, almost impossible to write a book of reminiscences without, however unintentionally, offending somebody. If anybody, on reading mine, should feel aggrieved, politically or personally, I would ask him or her to pause for a moment and reflect on all the things I *might* have said—a heart-searching process which should have the salutary effect of changing any temporary feeling of annoyance into one of intense relief and profound gratitude to the author for a restraint which in one or two instances has not been achieved without effort.

Some of the incidents described in this book have already appeared in the *Nation and Athenæum*, *The Outlook*, *Country Life* and *The Ladies' Field*, to the Editors of which the customary acknowledgments are made.



## PART I

It is the race creates our soul  
By touches many fingered.  
It is our land that makes the song to sing  
In beauty like the forest's murmuring.

HERBERT TRENCH





## CHAPTER I

### EARLY DAYS

THE Irish are a kindly and amiable race with an instinctive taste for bloodshed which breaks out as a rule two or three times in the course of every century.

In one of the intervals between two rebellions, when the memory of the last had died down and before the next had had time to develop, my father, Richard Leeson, built himself a house in Kerry. It was a wholly unnecessary proceeding on his part, for on coming into the Marshall estates, which he inherited from his maternal uncle, he found himself already in possession of three ruined castles and four derelict houses, the result of seven generations of architectural effort on the part of his ancestors which should have acted as a warning, and any of which he might have restored with more success than attended the building of Callinafercy, a house without a redeeming feature. It has not even a view, although within a stone's throw of all the magnificent scenery of Dingle Bay, at the head of which it is situated. In his defence it must, however, be admitted that he lived in an age without taste and in a country devoid of traditional domestic architecture ; while it is at any rate to his credit that he did not perpetrate another of the numerous pretentious sham castles which sprang up like mushrooms all over the South of Ireland in the earlier part of the nineteenth

century and which were the belated outcome of the "Gothic revival" which Horace Walpole did so much to popularize in England.

A lovely old ruin with great possibilities which he seems to have ignored was Killaha Castle, near Killarney, the ancient stronghold of the O'Donoghue of the Glen, which came into the family by marriage with a daughter of the clan. The Marshalls, who were descended from a Cromwellian officer who came over with Sir Charles Wilmot's expedition to Ireland in 1602, seem to have picked up local heiresses with great facility and, with the Markhams, who were also Cromwellians and with whom they intermarried, appear to have acquired, after the fashion of the English of the day, a good deal of land in Kerry to which they possibly had no very valid claim. As a class they are held in abhorrence by Mr. de Valera, whose anxiety to dispossess their descendants is only equalled by the ruthless determination of Providence to exterminate them; most Protestant families in Kerry to-day being on the verge of extinction.

I was too young when he died to remember my father, who was in no way a typical Irish landlord, since he neither hunted nor fished nor shot. He was the second of the seven sons of Robert Leeson and great-grandson of the 1st Earl of Milltown who built Russborough in County Wicklow, one of the most perfect Georgian houses in Ireland, decorated by Italian workmen, and with ceilings painted by Angelica Kauffmann, which passed out of the Leeson family on the death, in 1891, of the last Earl—popularly known as "Blastus, the King's Chamberlain," the nickname bestowed on him in Dublin, where he was famous for the bad language he used, and where he held an appointment

as Lord Chamberlain to the Viceroy (Blastus, I may mention for the benefit of those whose Biblical knowledge is not what it might be, being an official who held a similar position at the Court of King Herod).

The title, which had been in abeyance for some years, devolved in 1930 on my brother, Markham Leeson-Marshall, who has so far made no effort to establish his claim, being of the opinion that a peerage without an heir or the wherewithal to live up to it would be more of a liability than an asset.

My father, who was originally in the Army, retired when he married. My mother was the eldest daughter of the Venerable Ambrose Power, Archdeacon of Lismore and grand-daughter of Sir John Power, of Kilfane, who founded the Kilkenny Hunt in 1797 and of whom it used to be said that "not to know Sir John Power was not to know Ireland."

The elder of the two sons of John Power of Tullamaine Castle in Co. Tipperary, who was A.D.C. to Lord Clive in India, my great-grandfather, who was made a baronet in 1836, was not only a great sportsman and a wonderful host, but, what is more unusual in hunting circles, a well-read and highly cultivated man ; while his brother Richard, who had a house in Dublin but who spent a great deal of his time at Kilfane, was a marvellous amateur actor who, after taking a leading part in innumerable theatrical performances at Kilfane and elsewhere, eventually founded the Private Theatre of Kilkenny, which from 1802 to 1819 brought not only considerable fame to the performers but fortune to the charitable institutions of the town, to which the proceeds were devoted.

The popularity of Richard Power, who died of consumption in 1824, is eloquently expressed in

the Introduction to the Book of the Kilkenny Theatre, where, in the florid language of the day, he is described as possessing "the accomplishments of a mind embellished by the cultivation of the fine arts directed by a correct taste and imparting to his conversation that grace without effort and interest without display for which he was distinguished."

"His principles [we read] were pure, his sense of honour high, his affections generous and kind . . . he was a fond relation : in his closer intimacies the steadiest and most devoted friend, in his general intercourse frank, cordial and conciliatory. It was truly said of him that he never made an enemy or lost a friend and in a country distracted by civil war and religious discord a man could not be found of any sect or party who felt unkindly towards him."

In spite of Sir John having left six sons and several grandsons the Power baronetcy appears at the moment to be without an established heir, while Kilfane, once the centre of gaiety and unbounded hospitality, is now the home of a solitary spinster who admits, not without protest, an occasional visitor from the outer world.

My mother was considered extremely beautiful, but I never knew anybody who got less value for her beauty. I doubt if she was even aware of it. It certainly did not interest her. As a matter of fact, I do not think she was interested in anything, with the possible exception of the next world, and even on that her views were distinctly vague. She inherited none of the Power characteristics or accomplishments. Unlike her father the Arch-deacon, who, in spite of having only one arm, was a hard rider to hounds, she was never on a horse in her life and possessed none of the genial accessibility which endeared him so much to the inhabitants of Lismore that, when he died and it



SIR JOHN POWER, BART.,  
OF KILFANE



was proposed to erect a memorial to him in the Cathedral, the Roman Catholics of the town begged for one to which they could all subscribe, a fountain somewhat in the lamentable style of the Albert Memorial being ultimately erected. I have been told of my grandfather that he never drove past a dance on Sundays at the cross-roads without alighting from his gig and taking a turn with one of the country girls. My mother not only never danced but thought it and such pastimes as acting and card-playing sinful.

In the 'sixties and 'seventies of the nineteenth century life must have been inexpressibly dreary for a young couple with no country pursuits, few neighbours and their nearest town, Tralee, thirteen miles away over a desolate mountain road. Except for a year in Italy I don't think they ever left home, and apart from an occasional visit from my uncles and aunts they do not appear to have seen anybody from the outer world. Their nearest neighbours, Sir John and Lady Godfrey, were, like themselves, a young couple with a growing family, but though, as children, we were all inseparable and eventually married each other to a somewhat confusing extent, neither my mother nor Lady Godfrey ever became sufficiently familiar to call each other by their christian names.

In the remoteness in which they dwelt religion seems to have been their chief support, the puritanical Evangelicism which was then rampant in Ireland, and which expressed itself in devastating tracts and Sankey and Moody hymns, providing them with moral and religious comfort; while, judging from the innumerable volumes they left behind them, they must have devoured sermons with the same avidity with which the present generation devours detective fiction. Brought up



on the Hell and Everlasting Punishment theory, from the time I could speak I never went to bed without repeating

“ I lay my body down to sleep,  
I give my soul to God to keep ;  
If I should die before I wake  
I pray the Lord my soul to take ; ”

while in my dreams I could smell the sulphur and brimstone, which, I was led to suppose, would otherwise await me in the—somewhat unlikely—event of my premature decease.

My parents do not appear to have been especially interested in their children. My brother and eldest sister Mary ran more or less wild in the former's holidays. They were many years older than me and the subject of extreme envy on my part. My next sister, Grace, was delicate and, though I was extremely robust, whenever she got ill I was subjected to the treatment prescribed for her. On one occasion, when she had earache, my ears were stuffed with cotton-wool and I was only allowed out with a red-flannel bandage tied round my head. She was thin and pale and I was fat and pink, but when she was ordered cod-liver oil I was made to share the dose ; and when my father died and we were leaving home for good, the carriage being at the door to take us to the train, a half-finished bottle of this loathsome liquid being discovered in the nursery cupboard, it was poured down my throat in order that it should not be “wasted.” I can remember to this day the taste of it and the extreme satisfaction it gave me when I was subsequently sick all over the carriage and everybody in it.

For several years after my father's death we lived abroad, in France, Brussels and Germany, undergoing the painful but inevitable process of

education. I loathed my schooldays and can never look at a schoolgirl to this day without a feeling of repulsion. Life in Germany was made even more unpleasant than it need have been, owing to my being made to play the piano, an instrument I have always detested and for which I had no talent and so little ear for music that it is with the greatest difficulty I can recognize the most hackneyed tunes. Yet because it was then considered a necessary item in every girl's education I was made to practise for five and six hours every day, with the sole result that on my eighteenth birthday I closed the piano with a bang for ever.

During our absence abroad Ireland went through, in the 'eighties, another of her periodic upheavals in the cause of "freedom," which had for its immediate object the non-payment of rent and the extermination of landlordism. The "Plan of Campaign" was carried out with exceptional virulence in Kerry, where "moonlighting" and "boycotting" made life impossible for anybody who defied the decrees of the Land League. In justification of the brutal murders and outrages committed it must be admitted that they were often the result of callous evictions and that eventually they wrested from England a much-needed reform in the Land Laws and led to the series of Acts, from Lord Ashbourne's to that of George Wyndham, by which the people of Ireland were to become owners of the soil for which they had fought so often and so desperately.

## CHAPTER II

### IRELAND IN THE 'NINETIES—MARRIAGE

THE Ireland I returned to had settled down once more. A few people in the 'nineties still had "police protection." The Morrogh Bernards with whom I stayed near Killarney had four enormous members of the R.I.C. (Royal Irish Constabulary) living on the premises, two of whom invariably accompanied us on bicycles whenever we went out, a proceeding which thrilled me to the marrow and which made us a subject of intense interest to the American tourists we met on the road. But this was an exceptional instance, due to nervousness on the part of Mr. Bernard, who had taken seriously a threatening letter from a disgruntled tenant.

Everywhere in the South rents were being paid and landowners were flocking back in approved fashion to their homes. Mr. Parnell had emerged triumphantly out of the Pigott conspiracy. Under the Ashbourne Act land purchase was progressing satisfactorily and even *The Times* was admitting that prospects in Ireland were cheerful. Once more it looked as if the age-long quarrel with England had come to an end; and if the settlement of the land question had meant the settlement of Ireland, undoubtedly the peace we were then enjoying would have been more lasting than it eventually proved. Unfortunately, however, the Irish question goes somewhat deeper and has for

its underlying motive nothing less than complete separation from England—a fact not even dimly apprehended by our legislators at that time, and the full significance of which is only being grasped to-day.

Politics, however, were the last thing to occupy my mind just then. As a matter of fact, I don't suppose I had a mind—the young very seldom had in those days.

My old home was shut up. My brother, who had had a hectic time with the Land League, was living in London. He had been called to the Bar and had married Mabel Godfrey, who died a couple of years later when their little girl May was only a few months old. My mother, who had always disliked Kerry, was living with my sisters in England, but to me at that time, and, indeed, to the present day, Ireland was the only country in the world, and for the next few years I spent most of my time there, paying visits, dancing, flirting and generally enjoying life.

For a young woman of those days I was extremely emancipated and went about a lot by myself—an unheard-of thing at that time in England, when girls were not supposed to cross the street by themselves or to pay a country-house visit without their parents. But I think people were more sensible in Ireland. Anyway, as my mother, being more or less of an invalid, never went anywhere, I had no one to go about with and travelled round Ireland from one house to another in the most independent fashion. My happiest memories are of Dromana, the beautiful home of my Uncle Henry and Aunt Mary Villiers Stuart, who had an enormous family, the youngest members of which were kept strictly in the background. My uncle, who was an autocratic and strangely remote creature, did not

apparently even know them by sight, as it is related of him that he once met them on the road and, being struck by their beauty, asked the nurse whose children they were, being greatly astonished on hearing they were his own. My aunt was a woman of exceptional charm and was adored by everybody. She was a perfect wife, a delightful mother and a popular hostess. Nothing ever upset her equanimity, not even being expected by my uncle to start at twenty-four hours' notice for the uttermost ends of the earth, in a day when travelling required distinctly more preparation than at present.

Romantically situated on a rock overhanging the Blackwater, Dromana was originally a Desmond Castle, the birthplace, and home in her youth, of the famous Countess of that name, of whom it is related that, at the age of 110, accompanied by her comparatively youthful daughter of ninety, she crossed from Youghal to Bristol, driving from there to London in a donkey-cart to petition Queen Elizabeth on the subject of her jointure, confiscated when her husband had been attainted. Although the family records are silent on the subject, one cannot help hoping that her enterprise was rewarded in other ways than in the bestowing on her, by the Queen, of a cast-off garment, the "slobbered forefront" of which deeply offended the old Countess, who eventually lived to the age of a hundred-and-forty and is said to have died from a fall from one of the cherry-trees which Sir Walter Raleigh had planted in Munster.

With five hundred years of family history lived within its walls, and a more than ordinary share of ghosts, a touch of the gruesome was added to Dromana by a room full of mummies in glass cases, which my uncle had brought back with him

from Egypt and which his family always regarded with superstitious horror—and to which people were inclined to attribute his own tragic end by drowning, the result of a fall as he was landing from his yacht on a dark night, just under the house.

His eldest son, Harry, died not long afterwards, at the age of forty, and though the mummies have long been relegated to a Dublin museum their curse still seems to hang over Dromana, on which Fortune smiles unwillingly to-day.

Another stately pile overhanging the Blackwater, where I put in much time in my youth, was Lismore Castle, where another of my uncles, who was agent to the Duke of Devonshire, lived for some years. The Duke himself never came to Ireland after the murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish, and the agency, which was one of the most-sought-after in Ireland, included the marvellous fishing and shooting of what was in those days a vast estate. After the death of the old Duke, his successor (better known as Lord Hartington) used to come over every year with his celebrated Duchess. They lived in great state, entertaining royalty and their country neighbours with the same indiscriminate magnificence.

“ Ah, them were the grand people,” as an old retainer not long ago regretfully remarked, referring to the days “ when Dukes were Dukes and Duchesses no trouble to anybody, betting and racing all day and gambling all night with the gold piled up on the table beside them.”

A few miles farther up the river was Glencairn Abbey, now, alas, like so many Irish country houses, a Cistercian nunnery, but then the home of another uncle and aunt, the Willie Powers, with whom I used to stay and from where I was married in 1897 to Home Gordon, the only son

of Sir Seton Gordon of Embo, a Scottish baronet whose ancestors had, however, forsaken Scotland many years before and made their home in Brighton. Home's father and mother had separated when he was four years old and he had been brought up by his grandmother, Ellen Lady Gordon, who had also separated from her husband after two years of matrimony. In the circumstances it was perhaps inevitable that Home and I should eventually follow the family tradition, but at the moment nothing was farther from our thoughts. The fact that we had nothing whatever but prospects to marry on in no way depressed us. Home had no profession and no conspicuous talents beyond a certain facility with his pen. He was, however, firmly convinced of his destiny as a writer of epoch-making novels. For a brief—very brief—period I shared this optimistic delusion ; but when, after some months of strenuous effort in the literary and journalistic world, he had only succeeded in obtaining the editorship of the *Banjo World* at three guineas a month, my confidence began to wane and I suggested his turning his attention to the City, where he eventually obtained a small secretaryship which annoyed his grandmother so much that she all but cut him out of her will (which was the chief asset in his prospects). Having described him as “a horrid little City clerk,” she accused him of dragging into the dust the illustrious House of Gordon, no member of which had ever degraded himself by earning his living. Except for this one Victorian prejudice on the subject of what constituted a “gentleman,” she was a really very up-to-date old lady, who lived to the age of ninety but not long enough to see the complete collapse of the traditions in which she had been brought up. I often wonder what

she would have thought of our modern shopkeeping aristocracy and of the commercial travellers of illustrious lineage who call upon us to-day with samples of vacuum-cleaners and sparking-plugs.

In due course she resigned herself to the social degradation involved by having a grandson in the City, and Home and I were married and eventually set up in London on an extremely problematical £500 a year, the best part of which went on a flat in Artillery Mansions.



## CHAPTER III

### LONDON—JOURNALISM—SOCIETY

I FOUND life in London at first very disappointing. We knew nobody and, being very hard up, went nowhere. The winter of 1897 was one of more or less continuous yellow fog which depressed and suffocated me. I loathed Artillery Mansions and the neighbourhood of Victoria Street during the two years I inhabited that colourless region. At the end of that time we moved to Ovington Square, where we had discovered a small house at a remarkably low rent. It looked out on trees and there was room to turn round in it. My spirits rose and I began to write.

When I look around to-day at the desperate effort of so many of the rising generation to force an entry into the fields of literature and journalism, I marvel at the ease with which I embarked on a career which, if not distinguished, was at any rate fairly lucrative, and which for some years kept me not only in pin money but interested and occupied.

Like everything else in life chance was responsible for this turn in the tide of my affairs. I had written a letter to the *Outlook*, a sixpenny paper of some repute, describing our adventures during a journey in Italy. To my surprise, the editor, Mr. Percy Hurd, not only printed it, but, on sending me a cheque for it, wrote me a personal letter asking if I would like to contribute a weekly article dealing with social subjects likely to be of

interest to women, for which he would be prepared to pay me 25s. per column. I was totally without experience and had never even attended a school of journalism, considered so necessary to-day, but of course I accepted the offer with enthusiasm and remained for some years on the staff—until, in fact, I had come to the end of all the topics and all the ideas of which my exhausted brain was capable. In the meantime the *Ladies' Field* had written to ask me to contribute a somewhat similar series of weekly articles for them, for which I received three guineas a week. One day Lady Colin Campbell, who was then editing the paper, sent for me to the office. I went in fear and trembling, thinking I was in for trouble of some kind, instead of which she made various flattering remarks about my writing and said that Mr. Edward Hudson, one of the proprietors of the paper, had asked her to arrange for me to meet him there. I was thrilled at making the acquaintance of Lady Colin, who was still very beautiful and attractive although crippled with rheumatism and her hands completely deformed. Mr. Hudson, who came in later, was also extraordinarily kind about my articles and asked us to stay the following week-end at Lindisfarne, his lovely castle on Holy Island in Northumberland, which had just been restored by Mr. Lutyens (now Sir Edwin), who was one of the party and who kept us all amused from morning till night.

Mr. Hudson was a most hospitable host not only at Lindisfarne, but in his equally delightful house in Queen Anne's Gate, where we frequently dined and where we met several stars of the literary and journalistic firmament, including Sir George Riddell (now Lord Riddell), who later insisted on my collaborating with him on a novel

which he wanted to write. That it was not a success when completed was no doubt largely due to my failure to give expression to ideas or impart life to characters I was not in sympathy with. Only too conscious of its shortcomings, we never had the nerve to offer it to a publisher, but buried it as a serial in one of the provincial papers which Sir George owned and in which my weekly articles were being reprinted at the time.

Although the collaboration did not prove a success, I got a great deal of entertainment out of the effort, Sir George Riddell being the most amusing and wittiest of companions. His attitude to life was one of amused cynicism ; he had no illusions and took nothing seriously. When I attacked the *News of the World*, which he owns and which I considered, and always shall consider, one of the most deplorable influences in journalism, unmoved by my vehemence he would draw a vivid picture of the drab existence of the British working man, living and toiling in colourless hardship, sitting down on Sunday morning with his pipe and his paper to the one thrill of his life : the pleasant exhilaration derived from sensational accounts of immorality in the upper classes and of crime in his own. It was impossible to argue or to disagree with Sir George—one could only laugh.

Most of my writing appeared under a pseudonym, but in 1908 I published under my own name a collection of essays, which was received with astonishment by certain of my friends and acquaintances. "How *clever* of you to be able to write!" they exclaimed, in terms of surprise mingled with awe. In vain I protested I wasn't at all profound. They persisted in regarding me as something abnormal and wanted to know all about my symptoms. "It must be so lovely,"

they said, "to feel the thoughts rushing out of you."

As I was anxious to retain their admiration, which was as welcome as it was unusual, I took care not to disillusion them by telling them that, far from being spontaneous, my writing was a matter of intense and depressing effort. Instead, I endeavoured to look as inspired as possible, while remaining more or less inarticulate. By this attitude (which I copied from the few distinguished authoresses I had met) I enhanced my reputation for "cleverness" and incidentally increased the sale of my book. For, of course, the less you utter in public, the more curious people will be to find out what you say in print. To this fact, even more than to the paucity of their ideas, must the silence of all great writers be attributed. Certainly no authoress who has gone into a fifth edition ever thinks of sparkling in society. She knows that all she need do is to look mysterious. The more successful she is in this respect, the more "interesting" she will be considered; that is to say, outside literary circles. The latter she naturally avoids. No literary woman ever wants to meet another of her own profession. They know too much about each other. This fact, however, is studiously ignored by their friends, whose chief object in life seems to be to bring all the "clever" people they know together. "You must meet Mrs. B.," they say, "you both write, so you are sure to get on." You begin to expostulate, but it is not the slightest use, for the next moment you find yourself introduced to Mrs. B., who, on being told of your literary proclivities, glares at you and says "Oh!" in surprised tones. It is obvious that she has never heard of you, and the probability is that you have also never heard of her. However, you sit down

side by side and wonder why on earth you should be supposed to get on together. It is true you both write, but far from that misfortune being the means of attracting you to each other, the only effect it has is of making you mutually suspicious. The fact of neither having read the other complicates the situation, so, after a few tentative remarks in which each tries to find out the other's "line," you fall back upon your respective publishers as a topic of discussion.

It is at this point that you really begin to get interested in each other. For, if there is one thing that every woman who writes wants to find out, it is—how much every other woman who writes makes by her pen. In the circumstances it is almost needless to remark that neither thinks of speaking the truth ; for her publishers' terms is the one subject on which the imagination of the authoress may be trusted to display itself. If she would weave half as much romance into her books as she weaves into the question of the royalties she receives or the editions she goes into, she might become really rich. As it is, after a few efforts, in which each tries to find out how much the other makes and neither succeeds in obtaining the slightest clue, the conversation flags, and you finally take leave of each other, wondering more than ever why your hostess should have been so anxious to bring you together.

In addition to being a director of Newnes' Mr. Hudson was the chief proprietor of *Country Life*, in which he took a keen personal interest. I often went with him in his car on expeditions to look at houses and gardens, reproductions of which were to appear in that delightful weekly. On one occasion he took me to lunch at Gravetye with Mr. William Robinson and I think it was the result

of this visit, and of another to Miss Jekyll's at Munstead, which first fired me with the desire to be a gardener.

Mr. Robinson, who comes from the North of Ireland, is paralysed and was wheeled about in a Bath-chair. I was so afraid he might expect some intelligent remarks from me as we went round the place that I opened conversation by announcing I knew nothing whatever about gardening, to which he replied mournfully, "*Nobody* does." Later, when I stopped, transfixed by a gigantic dahlia, and asked him how he managed to get it to grow to such a size, he told me an amusing story of an affected lady he once met, in whose garden everything grew abnormally large. When he asked her how she managed it, she replied with a simper, "*Love—just love,*" whereupon her old Scotch gardener, who was accompanying them, remarked testily, "Nonsense, ma'am, you know it's manure."

If I owe whatever gardening knowledge I possess to-day to Mr. Hudson, my mental development—such as it is—was entirely due to Dr. Emil Reich. A Hungarian by birth, a Doctor of Law and Professor of History, who had spent most of his life in France, he was lecturing, when I came across him, at the Imperial Institute on Greek art. His English was as perfect as his French and he had the most beautiful voice and delivery. Without notes of any kind he could pour forth for hours on almost any subject under the sun, carrying his audience away on a flood of oratory hitherto unknown in the lecture rooms of the London University. Later he became a fashionable craze, with Claridge's the scene of a series of lectures on "Plato and Platonism," to which society women, always in search of a new sensation, flocked for a

time. The craze, however, did not last long—London crazes seldom do. Some prophet from the East, with a new philosophy or a new religion, took his place. Platonism, which I think most of the audience fondly imagined had something to do with love, was out of date, anyway. The Hindu with the unpronounceable name looked so romantic—his “message” was so “intriguing.” As the Queen’s Hall began to fill, Claridge’s began to empty. Emil Reich was already a sick man. His books, like his lectures, no longer met with the success they deserved. He became embittered, and slashed with his pen and his tongue against the excessive Imperialism to which he attributed the intellectual barrenness of English men and women. On every possible occasion he thundered forth on the coming war with Germany, even going so far as giving 1912 as the date when it would start, which was only two years out. He foretold that it would be a long and a desperate struggle, that England would emerge from it victorious for a time, but that later she would collapse; that one by one she would lose her colonies and eventually degenerate into a second-rate island kingdom.

Nobody listened.

Nothing, as a matter of fact, was further from people’s minds in the early days of the new century than war. Everything seemed eternally stable and permanent, society rotating round its amusements, which seemed as fixed as the rotation of the planets round the sun. London was gay in the ponderous Victorian way which still lingered on during the first few years of King Edward’s reign. Our finances had improved. The *Banjo World* had been succeeded by journalism of a more universal and more lucrative nature. The City had provided a couple of directorships. We had got to

know a number of people and were asked to colossal lunches and gargantuan dinners of nine or ten courses. I often found myself wondering on what principle the guests had been invited to meet each other, as one seldom sat next anyone of particular interest. One night, at a party of thirty-six, I discovered that the name of everyone at the table began with a G or an H. We were being worked off alphabetically!

On another occasion I said to the daughter of the house, who was rather a friend of mine, that I could not understand why her mother, who was a notorious “climber,” bothered to ask people like us who did not entertain and did not possess menservants. “She thinks you will have them some day,” she replied, “she is entertaining you for the future.”

There was one house in Belgrave Square to which we were often invited, where the host let himself go on occasions regardless of his painfully acquired letter “h.” One night, having asked me the name of one of his own guests, and replying, when I told him, that she was “d——d ugly,” he leant back in his chair and said with a sigh, “Society is up’ill work, my dear, up’ill work.”

Personally I derived a good deal of amusement from these entertainments. I have always liked good food and good wine and thoroughly appreciated the hospitality of the rich, who in those days vied with each other in sumptuous entertaining: but the life of a parasite was not one I could continue to lead indefinitely. It was empty and aimless. I was restless, and none of the “causes” or movements in which other women seemed to find a certain feverish distraction afforded me any abiding satisfaction. Woman Suffrage and Christian Science both left me cold. I never



wanted anything so obvious as a vote and my faith was never of the kind that could remove mountains or cure measles. Theosophy held me for a brief while—until I was invited to meet the new Messiah discovered in India by Mrs. Besant and introduced to London by Lady Emily Lutyens. He was a beautiful Hindu boy about twelve years old. He wore an Eton collar and was being taken, I discovered, to Olympia by the Lutyens boys to learn roller-skating, which seemed to me a strangely inappropriate anti-climax to the innumerable and varied incarnations through which he had been traced in the course of the ages.

Fading out of theosophical circles, I drifted on and off committees and in and out of various futile attempts at social reform. Mr. Brisco, Lucy Lady Egmont's second husband, whose whole life was devoted to good works, persuaded me at dinner one night to adopt a Church Army family. It was a disastrous experience in which the "Army" and I were equally imposed upon, and which put me off all such experiments for ever. As a matter of fact, I am afraid I was not born with the necessary enthusiasm for reforming people. I cannot even make up my mind whether amateur social reform is much use; sometimes I am inclined to think it might possibly be better to leave things alone, since much of what is called "reform" only appears to aggravate the misery it is intended to relieve. As things are, it seems to me that unless you can pull a weed up by its roots it is hardly worth while attacking it at all. To snip its head off is merely to encourage and promote the growth which you are foolishly endeavouring to check. And nearly all the social reformers I knew at that time did nothing but snip.

Disappointed and disillusioned, I had got to

the stage which sooner or later we all reach, when one pauses to take stock of oneself and to ask wildly of Heaven what one is to do with one's life. I felt I must get away from everybody and everything if I were not to become like the lady in the Divorce Court who, on being reprimanded by the judge for the frequency with which she committed adultery, flippantly remarked : “ Well, what else *can* you do between tea and dinner ? ”

Fortunately for my morals, before I was driven to such desperate extremes a way out of my difficulties presented itself. I came in for a small sum of money with which I acquired a tiny property in Kerry, which had at one time belonged to an ancestor, Judge Day, who had given it as a wedding present to his niece, “ Bess ” Stokes, whose ghost was still to be seen—an old lady in grey—standing at the gate near the ruined cottage she had built and in which she was said to have “ taken the floor ” herself at a party she had given to celebrate her hundredth birthday.

And I started building, being the ninth member of my demented family to do so in Kerry.

## CHAPTER IV

### KERRY—A HOUSE AND A BOG

THE site I chose for my house was perfect. On a height above Caragh Lake, it was surrounded by mountains varying in colour from deepest purple to distant misty blue. Tall fir-trees led down to the water's edge, where a little bay of my own was formed by a long and narrow wooded island of strange, mysterious charm, where herons nested and bred. Behind the house, the twin peaks of Carrantuohill, the highest mountain in Ireland, rose above the vast gorse and heather-clad bog, and away to the right the sea glinted faintly at the foot of the Slieve Mish range.

To convey any impression of the wild romantic beauty of the landscape in words is as impossible as to portray it on canvas. No picture I have seen has ever done it justice and, personally, I am utterly incapable of describing it on paper. For one thing, it was always changing. Seen in the mist of an autumn morning, with lake and mountains merged in the pearly haze, it was like a scene in Fairyland. Later, when the mist had rolled away, the mountains would slowly take on shape and colour as the clouds flung shadows in the hollows of their sloping heights, while the Lake, reflecting the brilliant blue of the sky, lay smiling at their feet. A wind would suddenly get up—"a fairy blast" as it is called in Kerry—and the Lake, breaking into white-crested waves, would

dance madly up and down, while the mountains frowned threateningly against the darkening sky. Later—all still again, the purple stems of the fir-trees reflecting the light of the setting sun, the opalescent water breaking gently against the rocks at the end of the island, where I used to sit transfixed until the moon rose and the final change to the silver radiance of the night drove me indoors. In rain and wind it was another different world, which changed, however, quite as often as on days of golden glamour, the Lake glooming in a thousand shades of grey and lead, the mountains withdrawing behind impenetrable mist or glowering, black and forbidding, behind the storm-clouds driving furiously up from the Atlantic.

Only once have I seen the fury of a Kerry gale surpassed, and that was by a Mediterranean one in North Africa, which appeared to hurl the ships in the harbour into the air, and which actually blew the glass out of our bedroom windows, an experience which impressed itself chiefly on my mind by the fact of our being charged for the damage in our bill by a rapacious hotelkeeper, who, I need hardly say, was French !

Terrifying as a Kerry gale can be, I never found it melancholy or half so depressing as a wet day in London. For there is an elemental grandeur about an Atlantic storm, not only music in the sound of wind and rain and running water, but something more : an inherent sense of fitness, as if to be tossed by the wind and drenched by the rain were necessary to bring the soul within reach of the stars—a sense of healthfulness to mind and body which the inhabitants of Kerry feel, which makes them suspicious of drought and a prolonged course of sunshine. The winter I started my building was a phenomenal one. For months hardly a drop

of rain had fallen, the temperature being almost as high as that in an average summer. An unusual number of people had died. Commenting on it to one of the men engaged in clearing the ground for the foundations, "Faith," he replied, "there've been a fright of deaths of late, it could be that the weather came too fine."

To build a house at any time is for a woman more or less of an undertaking, and building, like fighting a battle miles from your base, adds considerably to the difficulties of the situation. My house, for reasons of economy and because I was in too great a hurry for bricks and mortar, was made of wood, which was to come over from England in sections duly numbered and labelled. Unfortunately, it suffered at the first start off from the disadvantage of having got lost in the post on its way over. Three workmen and a small boy, also imported from England, sat patiently on the site for a week, cheered by the spasmodic arrival of occasional consignments of doors and window-frames. In due course, however, the framework turned up, and having seen operations commence I returned to London, with implicit confidence in human nature in general and the building trade in particular. No sooner was I established in London, however, than my presence in Ireland seemed imperative, and whenever I was in Ireland I was invariably required in London. No matter how often I crossed the Channel I never seemed to be in the right place. However quickly I came, I was invariably just too late to effect some vital alteration which would have enhanced the beauty of the structure and materially added to my happiness on earth.

With regard to the workmen, I am sure no more industrious or well-meaning individuals exist, but

I never saw people more lacking in imagination or with a more irritating determination to adhere rigidly to the "plans," regardless of consequences. *En passant*, I may as well remark that, having designed all the important parts of the house myself, such as the drawing-room and the verandah, the bay-windows and my own bedroom, I had left such uninteresting details as the chimneys and stairs to the contractor. Unlike the generality of women, I had taken, I flatter myself, an intelligent interest in the drains and waterworks, and by my insistence on a hot-water supply at the top of the house had created nothing short of a panic among the local plumbers, whose only idea on the subject had hitherto been limited to the mysterious working of a "geyser." It was only on one of my many returns to London that I discovered that the hot-water supply installed with such a flourish of trumpets would not have permitted of the bathing of anything larger than a cat, and the consequent change of cisterns, cylinders and tanks involved, I need hardly remark, another speedy departure to the scene of action, as well as an alarming increase of expenditure.

The waterworks were, however, a comparatively minor item. The plumbers, being Irish, were sympathetic and were just as ready to pull anything down as they were to put it up. They were full of zeal and ardour, as were the tradespeople who sent in their bills before the work was begun, while the tax-collector served a notice demanding the water-rate for the quarter preceding the laying of the foundations of the house. Even the paper-hanger threw up two other contracts to come to me, and though I knew that it was a foregone conclusion that he would leave me in the middle of the job and not return for some months, I could

not but feel flattered at his coming at all. A cynic once said that his ideal of social happiness was to be asked everywhere and to go nowhere. I have never met anyone but the paperhanger in question who was in any way able to live up to this ideal. The only available man of his trade in the neighbourhood, with the whole county grovelling before him, endeavouring by every means in their power to flatter and cajole him into doing a little papering or painting for them, he enjoyed nothing more than promising to go to one, while ultimately going to a second or disappointing them both by staying at home. Curiosity brought him to me, a wooden house being a sufficiently exciting novelty in those parts ; the moment he became bored he left, and, being utterly indifferent to mere money-making, the probabilities of his return were slight.

It was not, however, in the vagaries of the Irish workmen that my chief difficulties lay, but rather in the stolidity of the English ones. As the work proceeded and the house began to shape itself, certain defects naturally obtruded themselves on my view, certain alterations and improvements suggested themselves. With that terrible lack of imagination inherent in the British workman, every protest I raised was met with the reply that it was " exactly as it was in the plan." Of course, had I realized what an immutable fixture a plan once agreed to was, I should have insisted in the contract on leaving the size of the rooms optional till almost the end, and on having transferable doors and windows.

It was, however, when I suggested moving the hall chimney that humanity—in the shape of the contractor—was really staggered. Not having designed that excrescence, it was palpably not my fault that on coming out of the drawing-room door

—if one did so at all exuberantly—one was bound to knock one's shoulder against the sharp edge of the mantelshelf, catch one's foot in the brass fender and fall headlong against the banister rail of the staircase. The proximity of the door, staircase and chimney was, as I showed him, the only blot on an otherwise admirably constructed residence. I made a point of telling him this, as I wanted him to know that I was thoroughly satisfied with my own share of the plans. The fault obviously lay with him. I told him so. He did not attempt to deny the charge. Instead, he drew himself up and, with an ingratiating smile, remarked that in view of the great success of the rest of the house I must forgive him. "It is really the nicest little house I ever built," he added with pride, "and the first in which I've been able to carry out *all my own ideas*."

As a matter of fact it was perfectly frightful and not in the least what I had intended it to be. But it didn't matter. Nothing mattered in that enchanted land of lake and bog, of moor and mountain, in which, after the Nothingness of London, I had at last found not only an aim and an object, but peace and infinite content. A new and a freer air seemed to blow through my mind as well as in my face as I lay back in the boat, ostensibly trolling for trout but mostly watching the sun set in golden glory over See Fin, while fairy music floated on the evening air ; or wandering, as I often did, among the mountains and bogs of Glencar, where, according to an old poem :

Corn never enjoys autumn sun,  
Bare and rugged high mountains from that to the West,  
These are the parts St. Patrick never blessed,

an omission on the part of the saint which perhaps accounts for the fact that the spirit which broods



over the bogs of Glencar is essentially pagan, and as different from the spirit which hovers in gentle and mysterious loneliness over the blue mountains as the brown world of reality is different from the Land of Promise we see stretching away beyond our reach.

Brown bog and blue hill—where indeed, I often wondered, could be found a truer symbol of life, with its lonely wastes and its oozy depths into which we sink in our struggle to reach the sunlit peaks rising ever above us into the clouds?

Pagan as this spirit of the bog undoubtedly is, it has penetrated all unconsciously into the soul of the most Catholic people in the world, the inhabitants of Kerry, of whom it has been said that “they give no right and they take no wrong,” and in whose hearts dwells the relentless spirit that we find in Greek tragedy, the spirit of remorseless fate against which it seems as useless to struggle as against the storms of wind and rain which, sweeping up from the Atlantic, shriek and whistle in impotent rage over the desolation they are unable to destroy. Yet out of this fatalism—perhaps, indeed, because of it—is engendered a great strength: the strength of endurance which makes light of labour and hunger and cold and sorrow, and is not cast down by difficulty nor broken by defeat. In the pervasive atmosphere of the bog, with its defiant barrenness and its self-sufficing loneliness, all the commonplace desires of life, all the smallnesses of human ambitions imperceptibly faded away. The very questions which seem of so much moment in the toil and stir of life—namely, what we are and why we are and what we are to do—no longer perplexed and worried me. It was enough that I was, that I could see the flaming gold of the gorse, the crimson purple of the loosestrife, that I could feel the fresh

fragrant air blowing in my face and smell the pungent odour of the black turf sods. For the moment, time and space were non-existent, and all the problems of life seemed solved by the old turf-cutter in his reply to an inquiry about the road, "Straight on, and the road will turn with you"; an Irish answer, but like most Irish answers, expressive, and in this case expressive of more than the road to Glencar. For in life, is not the road that "turns with us" the road that we follow, the road along which we travel to salvation or destruction, according as Destiny directs?

## CHAPTER V

### MAKING A GARDEN

LIFE, however, was not all floating in the sunset on an opalescent lake or walking on wonder bridges over mountain-tops.

Colossal enterprises absorbed me by day. There was, for instance, the Garden.

There are, I believe, people who enjoy gardening. Even I myself once imagined it to be a delightful pursuit, but that was long before the garden of my dreams took on a practical shape and became a haunting reality.

Having no experience whatever on the subject, I engaged a lady gardener to assist me in laying out the site, only to find that she knew even less about it than I did. She was full of theories and devoted hours to the working out of colour schemes, one of which she planned for me consisting of *Hyacinthus candicans* and *Lobelia cardinalis*, the contrasting red and white of which she assured me I should find intensely pleasing. Unfortunately, the former flowering as it does in May and the latter not coming out till September, I was never able to enjoy the effect on which she discoursed so eloquently. Her practical knowledge was even more hopeless than her colour schemes. When putting up espaliers for the apple- and pear-trees, as soon as the post on one side was fixed in the ground the one at the other end rose out of it. Nothing that she could devise would keep them

both in at the same time and it was not until the local plumber came to the rescue that the fruit garden began to look less like the result of an earthquake.

After I had got rid of her I began to work seriously, endeavouring to absorb such information as I could glean from books. I think I had every book that was ever written on the subject of gardening and they all contradicted each other. Visitors who came to stay frequently complained that the whole literature of the house consisted of gardening books and Bradshaws. They did not want to garden, and nothing would ever induce them to go away, so no doubt they felt aggrieved. As a matter of fact, both forms of literature were equally superfluous. A railway time-table in a place where there are only two trains a day cannot be of much use except as a hint to one's guests, and a gardening book for a garden which follows no known tradition serves no purpose but that of bewildering its owner. Some day I felt it possible that I might come to understand my garden ; but I was quite certain I would never grasp even the most elementary book on the subject. At one time I actually attempted to follow the directions contained in some of them. I sowed seeds in April in gentle heat and pricked them out in May, subsequently planting the seedlings in a sheltered bed composed of a leafy compost of rich loam mixed with bone manure, placing the plants, when well established, in rows 6 inches apart, or something to that effect. In addition to all these precautions I watered and "mulched" and divided and pruned and disbudded as nearly as possible according to each of the conflicting theories contained in the seventeen handbooks with which I started my gardening career. I am more experienced now and feel some-

what like the old Irish woman who was recommended by the parish priest to spray her potato field. "To plaze his Riverince," she said, "I sprayed one half of it—the other half I left to God."

By the end of the summer I felt I might do worse than try the same experiment and leave the rest of my gardening to God. Thoroughly exhausted physically and mentally by my efforts, I came to the conclusion that the only gardens one enjoys are those belonging to one's friends, and that all the rhapsodies one reads about gardening in general are written over a blazing fire on tempestuous winter nights by people of exuberant imagination and no knowledge whatever on the subject. To read any of these glowing descriptions one would imagine that a garden was a place of divine repose, a refuge from the carking cares of the world, a nirvana of contentment in which one's higher instincts matured like rosebuds in the gracious warmth of the summer sun and one's soul developed in the soothing caress of the soft west wind :

A garden is a lovesome thing, God wot !  
Rose plot,  
Fringed pool,  
Fern'd grot,  
The veriest school  
Of Peace

as some idiot once wrote. But though he expressed himself very charmingly I very much doubt whether the poet in question had ever had any practical experience of gardening. Now, I had ; and I must candidly say that I did not in the least feel that my garden was a "school of peace." On the contrary, I should describe it as a perennial nightmare. Most people who are addicted to unpleasant

dreams know what it is to try in their sleep to catch a train which invariably steams out of the station as they dash breathlessly on to the platform. My garden had exactly the same elusive quality as that nightmarish train. In no circumstances did I ever succeed in catching the effect which, for the time being, I happened to be pursuing. It was always just about to express itself, but somehow or other it never did. If it had not been for an incurable belief in a future full of radiant possibilities, I do not believe that I could have kept up for another hour the exhausting and unequal struggle with Nature which the possession of a garden entails.

As it is, I am perfectly convinced that, far from expanding, my soul stultified, while my higher instincts certainly became paralysed under the demoralizing influence of competitive gardening. Far from the amiable tendencies of my nature (such as they are) developing, I found myself acquiring new and thoroughly vicious qualities. My whole life was embittered for several days that summer because a neighbour had a magnificent crop of sweet-pea, while mine was a complete failure. Up to that time I had always looked upon him as a delightful old gentleman. From that moment, however, I conceived an intense dislike for him—a dislike which was certainly not decreased by the fact of his subsequently sending me over large bunches of sweet-pea every second day for a month. The following summer, I am happy to say, our positions were reversed ; but it was only as I walked him up and down between the rows and saw his hungry gaze fixed on all the new varieties deliberately purchased with the intention of exciting his jealousy, that I realized the depth of vindictiveness to which gardening had reduced me.

In these circumstances it would be idle to pretend that gardening has an ennobling effect on the mind. But if it did not ennoble me and did not bring me the peace and contentment about which the poet so feelingly sings, on the other hand my garden never bored me. It worried me by day and it kept me awake by night ; it made me swear and it made me weep, and it would have taken very little more to make me scream. But it did not make me yawn ; by which it may be concluded that, if baffling, my garden had also a certain element of attraction for me. For one thing, I never knew what was going to happen in it, in which respect it may be said to have expressed something of the uncertainty of its owner. I never know what I am going to do next, and no more did my herbaceous border, in which the hollyhocks came into bloom in October, while the dahlias were over in July. Personally I am quite unable to account for the fantastic conduct adopted by Nature in my ill-regulated garden. When especially bewildered I used to write to the nursery from which I had originally procured the plants or the trees. The reply was invariably couched in respectful but utterly non-committal terms. Messrs. Dash thanked me for my esteemed communication and begged to inform me that the state of the flower or the tree to which I referred was "in all probability caused by the unusual climatic conditions of the past season." These conditions sometimes took the form of the "excessive drought" ; sometimes that of the "unprecedented rainfall." In any case, Messrs. Dash were careful to impress me with the fact that my "further valued commands" would be esteemed and would receive their "best care and attention."

## CHAPTER VI

TRAVELS—A MOTOR TOUR IN FRANCE—SICILY—INDIA  
—THE DURBAR—A PURDAH PARTY—"RANJI"

A COUNTRY house of one's own to go to settled once and for all the question of summer holidays, which so far we had usually spent paying visits in Ireland and Scotland. But we had got into the habit of going abroad in the spring, generally to Italy, where we had spent some delightful Easters with my cousins, Sir Willoughby and Lady Wade, in their enchanting villa at Maiano, on one of the hills above Florence. On his father's death in 1906, Home came in for the title and what Sir Seton had left of the family fortune. Early in the following year we invested in a 28-h.p. Daimler and started, with a couple of friends, Gertrude Reynolds (now Mrs. Harrison-Hughes) and Charles Russell (son of Lord Russell of Killowen, the famous judge), on a motor tour to the South of France. Unfortunately, on the very first day, we met with an accident, colliding with a French car as we rounded a corner on our wrong side, a not unusual mistake for an English chauffeur to make on a first experience of the different regulations prevailing abroad, but one which involved us in a broken front axle and necessitated our continuing our journey by rail. To the end, a malignant fate pursued us, the engine of our train breaking down and leaving us for hours in a siding within fifty miles of our destination ; and



when, at 1.30 a.m., after a long and wearisome journey, as we were being conveyed up the hill to our hotel, the horse in the omnibus collapsed, it looked as if destiny were making a final protest against our ever reaching the goal for which we had set out under such different auspices.

After all the obstacles thrust in our path, it might have been supposed by the superstitious that some terrible misfortune would overtake us as the result of persisting on a journey which Fate was obviously doing her best to circumvent. On the contrary, Fortune smiled on us to the last. We had hired a car to take us to Avignon, where the Daimler was to meet us on the completion of repairs. From there we were to start on a tour of Provence and the Châteaux of the Loire. At the appointed hour, the hired car drew up at the door of our hotel. A last visit to the Casino having resulted in a final run of luck for us all, unable to tear ourselves away from the tables neither Gertrude nor I had any time to pack our belongings. One by one, our garments were carefully carried down from our rooms by a procession of porters and eventually piled up in the car, which, with our trunks and a large collection of floral tributes from numerous admiring friends, presented the varied appearance of a guard's van, a florist's window and a second-hand clothes shop. A large and admiring crowd having gathered in the street, Gertrude, for whom we had been waiting for hours, at last appeared. Her veil was thrown back, and as she regally advanced, with a hot-water bag in one hand and a large hat from which there flowed yards of pale green chiffon in the other, she bowed graciously to the right and to the left as she passed through the rows of assembled porters, concierges and lift-boys. Taking her seat in the car, and

arranging the numerous rugs round her, she had just intimated with a wave of her hand that the car might proceed, when down the steps tripped the hotel manager, shouting in stentorian tones, "Madame n'a pas payé!"

A suppressed giggle from the assembled crowd broke the unearthly silence which ensued. After which Madame, wholly unperturbed, with many apologies for her forgetfulness, proceeded to look for her purse. Alas! it was not to be found. One by one, the various articles of attire, bouquets and hold-alls, dressing-bags and portmanteaux, were deposited on the pavement. At last, at the very bottom of the car, the purse was found, and, Madame having settled her week's bill, amid cheers and shouts of encouragement, we drove off.

The rest of our tour came off according to plan, and I remember very little about it except the Châteaux and some of the stories of crime and criminals with which Charles Russell used to entertain us in the evenings. One which especially sticks in my memory is of a Dr. C—— who lived in Cork and whose wife died and was duly buried without any suspicion as to the manner of her death having been aroused, except in the mind of one of the maids, who went over to a situation in London when the Doctor closed the house. One day, soon after, she was out walking when it began to rain. She had no umbrella, so, finding herself outside a small Roman Catholic Church, she took refuge inside. Seeing a wedding was in progress, she took a seat, and presently down the aisle walked Dr. C—— and his bride, who had been his children's governess. The maid's suspicions having been now confirmed, she communicated with the police in Cork, with the result that the body was dug up and analysed, and, traces of poison having

been found, the Doctor was arrested and in due course hanged.

Such a chain of coincidences leading up to the detection of a crime seems too strange to be true but is not, I believe, unusual. This, at any rate, was only one of many extraordinary instances which Charles Russell had come across in the course of his professional career as a lawyer of considerable experience.

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The following year we went farther afield, taking the car to Sicily ; two friends, Edward Hudson and Hagberg Wright (of the London Library), accompanying us on a tour which everybody advised us not to take. Nothing being so conducive to enterprise of any sort as a spirit of opposition, it followed as a matter of course that the more we were warned against going, the more determined we were to face the impassable roads, the brigands, the hostility of the inhabitants and the many difficulties we were assured we would meet with in a place which, in 1908, was, from a motoring point of view, a more or less unknown land.

Leaving London one day early in April, we made our way across France by the well-known route through Abbeville, Beauvais, Versailles, Melun, Autun, Macon, Lyons and Avignon to Monte Carlo. Of our progress on this part of our travels, one can only say that it was reminiscent of the Irish porter who, as he banged the door of the railway carriage, announced to the disconcerted passengers that "this thrain won't shtop anywhere." So far as the weather was concerned, there was certainly very little inducement to linger, until we got to Italy, where our hearts were cheered by an occasional gleam of elusive

sunshine. After a couple of days at Naples, having been warned against the roads of Calabria, we shipped the car to Palermo and continued our own journey there by rail.

Having duly exhausted the sights of Palermo, which we made our headquarters for the first week of our stay in Sicily, we set out one glorious morning for Segesta. On leaving the town we followed the road to Monreale, famous for its mosaics, its cloisters and its gorgeous view of the Conca d'Oro, the golden, lemon-covered valley stretching away to where Palermo at the foot of Monte Pellegrino juts out into the blue sea. Winding round the sides of a high mountain the scenery grew more and more beautiful, every turn bringing a new revelation in the way of wild flowers and geranium hedges, every village a new shock to our nervous systems.

When, on arriving in Sicily, we asked a resident his opinion as to the possibilities of motoring on the island, he cheerfully replied, “ Pour l'auto ce n'est pas le pays, mais si vous desirez le sport—— ! ” “ Le sport ” being a term capable of many interpretations, with, however, only one end, we were consequently more or less prepared for a certain amount of bloodshed. What we were not prepared for, however, was the suicidal tendency of every dog and chicken in Sicily, or for the pandemonium which our arrival caused in every village through which we passed. At the first sound of the horn every man rushed into the street, every woman on to her balcony, every child screamed on its highest note, every dog dashed barking and yelping under the wheels, while every chicken tore frantically backwards and forwards in front of the car. The open road, if somewhat less deafening, was even more perilous, for every

mule we met ran away, every horse stood on its hind legs, while the occupants of every cart were all but precipitated into the abyss which yawns on the side of every mountain road in Sicily. In these circumstances, we considered ourselves distinctly fortunate in arriving at our destination without serious injury to anything but our own nervous constitutions.

Leaving the car on the roadside, we climbed up the footpath to where, alone among the desolate mountains, the famous Temple of Segesta has stood in majestic grandeur for two thousand years and more. So old, indeed, is this monument, that neither the date of its birth nor that of the city which once surrounded it is known. Of the latter, not a trace remains to-day, yet it was once upon a time, 400 or 500 B.C., a town of great importance; and twice it was almost, owing to the independence of its inhabitants, the undoing of the Greeks in Sicily: first, when it provoked the ill-fated Athenian expedition under Alcibiades; and secondly, when, by appealing to Carthage for help against Silenus, it led to the invasion which, under Hannibal, the son of Gisco, made of its hated rival nothing but a memory. A century later, however, retribution fell on the Segestans at the hands of Agathocles, the great adventurer, who, in desperation at the failure of his attempts to establish his tyranny in Sicily, levelled the town to the ground, torturing and massacring the inhabitants, sparing only the most beautiful to be sold as slaves. Standing under the shadow of the columns of the vast temple it was impossible not to feel something of that spirit of desolation which, still brooding over the lovely landscape, seemed to blur everything with a sense of sadness.

Returning to Palermo that night, we started on

the following morning on the complete tour of the island which we had mapped out, and which was to lead us by Girgenti and Syracuse eventually to Taormina. In making our plans, however, we had not made any allowance for the Unexpected, that disturbing element which in life, and especially in motor tours, is so apt to upset the most simple of "programmes." To state our misfortunes and adventures briefly, we began by killing one dog and wounding a second, while we all but caused the death of two men, a woman, a child, a horse and a mule, and by the time we had reached Misilmeri, where a runaway mule turned a complete somersault in the air at our approach, overturning the cart, flinging the driver across the street and sending boxes of lemons flying in every direction, "le sport" seemed a singularly inadequate term to apply to our motoring experiences. Though Misilmeri was not much more than a suburb of Palermo, we had lost our way twice before we got there. We were, however, to do it even more efficaciously later on when, in desperation, we availed ourselves of the services of a retired soldier, who offered to conduct us as far as Corleone, a town situated about half-way to Girgenti. With so much confidence did his presence on the step inspire us that it was only after we had been running for hours in torrents of rain over desolate mountain passes, down into precipitous valleys, along a wild, deserted road which apparently wound its way round Infinity, that we began to wonder whether our guide was perhaps after all a brigand in disguise about to decoy us into a robber stronghold. At last we met some peasants on mules. We stopped and asked the way to Corleone. They pointed back in the direction from which we had come. As there had not been a

turn in the road for quite twenty miles our hearts began to fail us. It was now five o'clock and we had been travelling for seven hours. We asked where we were. "Quite close to Palermo," they replied. Nobody spoke, not even the guide. It was no good abusing him. Judging from his contrition, expressed on his face, he had meant well; but, like many other people with excellent intentions, he had lacked the necessary knowledge to carry them out. He had assured us that he knew every inch of the island, whereas, as a matter of fact, he did not even know the way out of his own village, Marineo, where we had picked him up. In the circumstances there was nothing to do but to dismiss him, to return to Palermo for the night, to go to a different hotel from the one we had quitted in the morning and to do our best to imagine ourselves in a new place. To this move we subsequently owed the most delightful of motor-ing experiences, for at the Hotel des Palmes we were fortunate enough to meet Signor Ragusa, a well-known motorist of racing fame, who promised not only to show us the way to Girgenti but to take us, a few days later, right across the island by the mountain route from Palermo to Taormina.

The next morning, therefore, we made a fresh start, our new guide in his 60-h.p. racing Darracq leading the way. Our progress on this occasion was somewhat different from what it had been on the previous day. It had poured all night and the roads were literally a sea of mud, through which Signor Ragusa splashed in front of us, clearing dogs and chickens in every direction and even sending the inhabitants flying into their houses for protection from the shower-bath of mud spurting from under the wheels of his car. As for the horses and mules, they were too deafened by the noise

emanating from his exhaust and too paralysed by the rapidity with which he flew past them to take any notice of us as we tore on in a wild endeavour to keep up with the racing car, which every now and again shot round a corner and disappeared into space. The pursuit only lasted, however, a short time, for we had not gone many miles before we found our guide in trouble on the side of the road. Mud had got into the engine and, the sparking having also gone wrong, he was eventually obliged to return to Palermo, leaving us to find the way once more to Girgenti. This time we were more fortunate, and after running through Corleone and climbing 3,000 feet up into the mountains past Prizzi and Bivona, where we burst a tyre and so provided the inhabitants with more excitement than they had ever experienced before in their lives, we arrived at the Hotel des Temples in time for tea.

Of all Sicily, Girgenti is the gem. From the point of scenery it is, of course, not to be compared to Taormina or Segesta or many of the other beautiful spots in the island. But with the exception of the Parthenon it is doubtful if any more marvellous temples are to be found than the three situated within half a mile of each other on the rocky land overlooking the deep blue sea and the Port of Empedocles. If there is a genius of a place—and who has not felt it and known it at some time or other?—its influence most certainly cannot be denied at Girgenti. Just as in Provence the spirit of Rome seems to make itself felt, even more than in Rome, so does the spirit of Greece seem to linger in Sicily to-day. Not only in the ruins of the beautiful temples is that harmony and unity which were the chief characteristics of Greek life expressed ; it is breathed as well in the land-



scape as in the atmosphere. The whole effect of Girgenti is of a golden glory. The sunset glow, the temples themselves, the wild flowers spreading like a carpet at their feet, the modern town gleaming through the columns of Concordia, are all the colour of burnished gold. If it be true, as Omar says :

that never blows so red  
The rose as where some buried Cæsar bled ;  
That every hyacinth the garden wears  
Dropt in her lap from some once lovely head,

then, indeed, the flowers at Girgenti may well represent the last resting-place on earth of the gods and goddesses, dead, alas ! like the men who raised the temples to their everlasting honour and glory.

It had been our intention on leaving Girgenti to run to Syracuse, but, hearing that no petrol was to be obtained there, and having been warned against the bad roads, we were reluctantly obliged to give up this part of our tour and return to Palermo by the same road by which we had come. Stopping another night at the Hotel des Palmes, where we picked up Signor Ragusa, we left on the following morning for Taormina. Anything more beautiful than this run it would be impossible to imagine. For the first few miles we followed the lovely coast road to Termini, with bamboos and geraniums growing down almost to the very edge of the shore, then, striking inland, we made our way over the Targa-Florio course up into the Madonian Mountains, past wonderful hill towns and through valleys which were a marvel of luxuriance and blossom, round through the snow-clad slopes of Etna, to where a lava-strewn waste bore witness to the desolation and ruin caused by the great volcano.

The sun was setting as, leaving Nelson's Duchy of Bronte on our right, we began to descend towards Randazzo, and it was quite dark by the time we had climbed to the top of the cliff on which Taormina is perched. But if, owing to the darkness, we missed what we were told was the best bit of scenery on the way, we had absorbed too much beauty as it was to bear a grudge against the night, which, after all, was the cause of new sensations of delight when we awoke next morning to our first glimpse of Taormina. Also, in a way, we had accomplished something of a feat, and even established a record, for apparently nobody had ever before gone from Palermo to Taormina in one day. Certainly not one of the crowd who saw us off in the morning believed that the heavy car, with its five passengers, its weight of luggage and its spare cans of petrol, would succeed in reaching its destination that night. For though the actual distance was only 175 miles, our road lay over high mountains; twice we ascended heights of 4,000 feet and at no time, owing to the twists and turns of the road, were we able to exceed a pace of twenty-five miles an hour, our average speed not being more than twenty. As it was, it was an unforgettable day of wonderful scenery, of gorgeous vegetation and blazing sunshine, with Etna in her pure white coldness dominating everything, and only the faintest, almost indiscernible curl of smoke against the deep blue sky betraying the fire smouldering away deep down in her breast.

Taormina is the one place which never seems to disappoint anybody. It is true it was not an ideal motoring centre; but even the tourist must rest sometimes, and where could one rest more divinely? It is true it was overcrowded with tourists, while

the numerous hotels and villas of uncompromising hideosity are certainly a blot on the landscape. But even with these drawbacks Taormina remains unique and individual, with a soul that cannot ever be lost even in the babel of the American and German invasion, with a theatre which, if it is more Roman than Greek, breathes all the poetry of classical antiquity, with gardens which in their blaze of colour and waves of scent produce no less intoxicating feelings of beauty and delight.

From Taormina we motored to Messina, a road which ran almost the whole way through a succession of villages, connected with each other by a series of ditches ; and from Messina we shipped the car back by sea to London, returning ourselves by train, thus bringing to an end a tour which was altogether delightful and full of interest from beginning to end. If there were drawbacks to motoring in Sicily they were not very serious ones, and they were more than compensated for by the wonderful beauty and interest of the island. As for brigands, I regret to say we never met one, though the popular illusion on the subject was still kept up by the fact of everybody in out-of-the-way districts being armed. It may be that the Sicilians pursue a deadly warfare with each other, but so far as the stranger is concerned a more kindly, courteous race does not exist, or one more amicably disposed towards the enterprising motorist.

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At the end of 1911 we went out to India for the Durbar, as the guests of the Jam Sahib of Nawanagar, better known as "Ranji." The voyage was more amusing than voyages to the East usually are, as the *Maloja* was practically a Durbar ship and all her passengers were travelling for pleasure

and were not gloomy and disgruntled soldiers and civil servants returning to India at the end of their leave. There were a number of Scottish peers and peeresses on board who took themselves very seriously ; the Duke and Duchess of Hamilton, Lord and Lady Cassillis and the Butes, who had brought their piper with them, and who all danced Highland reels together every night, much to the annoyance of the other passengers, who could not dance reels and who loathed bagpipes—which in any case seemed strangely inappropriate in the Indian Ocean. One night, to everybody else's joy, an exasperated American woman hurled five sofa cushions one after the other at the piper's head. The outrage was deeply resented by the Highland contingent, but it had the effect of silencing the pipes for the rest of the voyage. Unfortunately they broke out again in camp at Delhi, where they were appreciated even less than on board ship. Nobody, however, had the nerve to repeat the American lady's experiment.

Landing in Bombay was exactly like being let loose in the monkey-house at the Zoo, but in time we were rescued out of the jabbering crowd by emissaries of the Jam Sahib, who conveyed us to the Taj Mahal Hotel, where he had engaged a suite of rooms for us for the night, and a special carriage in the train to take us to Delhi ; this was only a foretaste of the marvellous hospitality he showed us throughout the whole of our stay in his camp and later in his own home at Jamnagar.

We were a large party in the camp, which consisted of two rows of tents with a garden down the middle. Among our fellow-guests were Lord and Lady Londesborough, with their charming daughter, Lady Irene Denison (now Marchioness of Carisbrooke), Sir Arthur Priestley (M.P. for

Grantham) and other cricketing friends of the Jam Sahib whose names I have forgotten. We had enormous dinner-parties every night, usually lasting about three hours. The Jam Sahib himself lived on Bengers's Food and must have been horribly bored having to spend so much time over it.

We had splendid seats for the state entry, but nobody saw the King. The Queen was all alone in the carriage and everybody was asking where he was. The procession stopped just in front of us ; and an address was replied to by somebody in a group of staff officers on horseback, who might have been anybody but who, one eventually realized, was the King. The Indian Princes were terribly annoyed about it—not one of them recognized him, while most of the natives, rather naturally, mistook the trumpeter for him, the latter being quite the most prominent person in the procession. Thirty thousand Moslems prepared to prostrate themselves on the ground never saw him at all. It was said that the reason for his being kept in the background was fear of an attempt being made on his life, but as every suspected person in India (and there were thousands of them) had been locked up before he arrived, the precautions seemed a bit overdone.

The Jam Sahib dined the next night with the King and Queen, and the Queen said to him she was afraid they had made a mistake and that the King should not have ridden ; to which the Jam Sahib replied : " Mistakes will always occur, Ma'am, when the right people are not consulted."

Various other mistakes, attributed to the Viceroy, were perpetrated on other occasions, especially at the Unveiling, where none of the Chiefs could see anything at all, the best places having been assigned to English people who could see the King and

Queen any day at home. The Durbar itself, however, was splendidly organized and a marvellous success. It was a perfectly wonderful sight, and so was the garden-party where the King and Queen sat, in their ermine robes with their crowns on their heads, on a white marble dais, looking exactly like a king and queen in the fairy tales of one's childhood.

Standing out in contrast to the magnificence generally prevailing in the camps of the Chiefs, the Imperial one, which was draped in crumpled blue muslin and furnished in the favourite style of the Tottenham Court Road, looked like a second-rate English seaside hotel. India, however, is like that—or so it seemed to me—a mixture of barbaric splendour and modern shoddiness.

The King did not call on any of the Chiefs, but sent Lord Hardinge instead. The day he came to our camp we were allowed to watch the procedure through a hole in the curtain. He and the Jam Sahib sat on a throne under a canopy and exchanged remarks in the Ollendorff manner. Then the Jam Sahib hung garlands round his neck, the A.D.C.s were all presented and everybody looked very foolish—nobody more so than the Viceroy.

The day of the garden-party we were taken to see the "purdah ladies" on their roof. They were nearly all children of fourteen or fifteen years of age, with their hair done in pigtails; most of them wore voluminous pink trousers and had pearls in their noses. Another day we went to a tea-party given by one of the Ranees. Like those of most people finding themselves for the first time in the East, my ideas on the subject of Indian women were of the haziest description, and I was flabbergasted to discover that she drove

her own motor, while the scene inside her tent bore no resemblance to the "Arabian Nights" conception I had previously cherished of an Indian zenana.

In the middle of the large reception tent, seated on a wonderfully wrought silver chair, sat our hostess, engaged with two other Maharanees in a violent discussion on the higher education of women. Round one of the large tea-tables in a far corner, a group of English peeresses in the latest Paris fashions were listening to recitations by a Hindu poetess of her own poems, written in English, perfectly delivered, with faultless enunciation. Presiding over the silver tea-pot was an English lady-doctor who, in the intervals of pouring out tea and handing round cakes, effected introductions and acted in general as mistress of the ceremonies, while from one table to another flitted the Maharanee's little granddaughter, aged nine, who could talk equally well in three languages, and who held definite views on the importance of having shaken hands with the Queen-Empress.

At first sight one felt that, if it had not been for the difference in dress, the gorgeous satins and flowing *saris*, the scene in no way differed from that round any English afternoon tea-table. But almost insensibly one became conscious of an "atmosphere," of a subtle distinction, not confined to mere questions of dress, between this particular tea-party and any other one had ever attended before. Instinctively one felt oneself in the presence of change—in an atmosphere of unrest which, if still vague and undefined, was, nevertheless, slowly but surely creeping through the carefully guarded screen shutting off the Maharanee's "purdah" tent from the clamour and chatter of the rest of the great Coronation Durbar camp.

The Woman Movement was still in its infancy in India. The Hindu lady who, thirsting for the emancipation of her sex, journeyed to England in order to throw in her lot with the Suffragettes, was horror-struck, when she arrived, at the prevailing discontent. "Your husbands eat at table with you," she exclaimed, "they drive in carriages beside you; what more can you possibly want?" Being women, it is highly probable that in India they did not know what they wanted any more than did those in England; but looking round the brilliantly arrayed assembly, taking stock of the intelligence, the interest and the curiosity displayed in the often beautiful and always animated faces of those present, one inevitably asked one's self, "How long can the present system last? How long will it be before the women of India cast aside their veils and tear down the screens shutting them out from the world, from knowledge, from life?"

Almost as if I had uttered the thought in my mind aloud came the answer from my neighbour at the tea-table—a quiet, undistinguished-looking person who, in spite of her white skin and European clothes, produced an impression of Oriental inscrutability. "Of course," she remarked, reading my mind without the slightest hesitation, "this sort of thing can't possibly continue. As soon as these old women"—waving her hands in the direction of a group of dowager Ranees—"are dead, the 'purdah' system will go. It is not the men who wish to keep it up, but the women themselves, the older generation, who would rather die than allow their faces to be seen in public."

Wondering all the time who she was, I listened to my neighbour as she told me of "purdah" life, of the appalling ignorance of Indian women, an



enormous proportion of whom were unable even to read or write, of their ignorance even in the management of their children, citing as an instance the case of one Maharanee who, in a moment of absentmindedness, had sat on her baby and had expressed extreme surprise on subsequently finding she had smothered it. Incidentally, while discussing the occupations and amusements of the "purdah" ladies, she alluded to a skating-rink she had provided for them "at home," whereupon, seeing my obvious mystification at her identity, she disclosed the fact that her husband was the Maharajah of J—, and bidding me good-bye, begged me to come and stay with her in her husband's state for a long visit at the end of the month. Unfortunately—or perhaps fortunately—I was not able to accept the invitation, which, alluring as it sounded, might, perhaps, have been connected with social disadvantages, the lady's career having been, as I subsequently discovered, somewhat chequered before she descended in a parachute at Rangoon into the heart and affections of the Maharajah, whose last and most cherished wife she had lately become.

Such cases are, however, rare, and I only quote my English Maharanee acquaintance as an amusing exception and for what she told me of "purdah," information about which is not always forthcoming in India. For if there is one subject which no Indian man will discuss it is that of his womenkind. Even in the bosom of his own family it is not etiquette for a man to ask after the health of his brother's wife, although he may know her to be seriously ill. To discuss, therefore, with strangers, the doings of your female relations would be an unpardonable breach of etiquette.

The age of advertisement had not then arrived

in India. Sooner or later the Indian woman will, no doubt, afford the same subject for illuminating conversation as the English woman affords in London clubs and country-house smoking-rooms. In the meantime she was at an interesting stage of her development. The languorous life of the zenana had been stirring for some time past with a vague unrest, to which the great Durbar suddenly gave life and meaning. Ten years before, only half a dozen Maharanees had taken part in the celebration of King Edward's Coronation; on the occasion of King George's over a hundred were encamped on the plains of Delhi. Their reception by the Queen-Empress, the prominence invariably given by the King-Emperor to his Consort, his leading her by the hand on official occasions, the homage expected and received by Her Majesty from the ruling Chiefs, all made a lasting impression on the leading women of India.

At that time their cry was all for education. In it they saw, as the Englishwoman of forty years before had seen, the panacea for all ills. Improved conditions of life it would certainly bring them, a larger sphere of activity and a reduction of infant mortality—but, one wondered, would it bring them happiness? From what one saw of the few cases of Indian girls who had been educated in England, the future seemed full of apprehension. The fate of one little Princess in particular was the subject of general interest at the Durbar. Brought up at an English school and accustomed to the healthy life of an English girl in society, she returned to India to become, under pathetic conditions, the wife of a great Chief. Her hockey stick, her "sweater" and her sailor hat were already in the native museum. The Princess, however, was not yet herself in the Chief's zenana,

and from all accounts there would be trouble if she ever did get there, which seemed unlikely.

Yet in every aspect of life there are compensations, and as the Begum of Bhopal—India's only woman ruler—said when I expressed surprise at her rigid adherence to the "purdah" veil, "My veil very useful—save much trouble. English lady when she go out paint face, powder nose, curl hair, make herself beautiful—purdah lady put down veil !"

The Durbar over, and the King and Queen and the Chiefs having departed, leaving more than a little dust behind them, we also left with the Jam Sahib for Nawanagar. The special train was due to start at 11 a.m. We sat in it for hours at Delhi station. It was late in the afternoon when it finally started, and we heard afterwards that the delay was caused by the railway authorities who, tired of providing special trains for Maharajahs who never paid for them, had demanded cash down for this particular one. The Jam Sahib, naturally not having several hundred pounds in his pocket, had not been able to comply with this request, and it had taken some hours to negotiate a mortgage on one of his own railways, which was the only alternative payment the Company would accept. The delay in starting, however, was nothing to those which occurred later, our journey occupying the best part of two days and two nights as, owing to the Jam Sahib's mother having consulted an astrologer who had predicted it would be unlucky for us to arrive on a Wednesday, we had to spend nearly the whole of that day in sidings admiring the scenery, which largely consisted of sand.

On arriving in his capital I was given the seat of honour in the carriage beside him for his state

entry, and had the greatest difficulty in restraining myself from bowing to right and left as his subjects prostrated themselves in the dust before him.

It had not rained for eighteen months at Jamnagar and the whole countryside was an arid sandy desert ; even the lakes we were always being told should have been there had completely disappeared. It was not really hot and there was plenty of wind, so I suppose it must have been the want of rain in the air which made the atmosphere so peculiar that one could not sleep. We all lived in bungalows in the garden of the Palace. Ours was next the Jam Sahib's private Zoo where the lions roared all night, the noise they made being, however, preferable to that of the sentry outside our window, who was violently sick all night and every night—at least I thought that was what was the matter with him, but people used to India said native sentries always coughed like that.

On Christmas Day we went to the coast, but the sea, like the lakes, had apparently dried up, as we saw nothing but mud. The tide, it seemed, went out for four miles. However, we poked about in the rocks for crabs, which we had cooked for tea, and in the evening the tide came in and we bathed. The Indian Ocean being, however, more sticky than wet, bathing in it did not really refresh one, and I have often felt damper in a Kerry shower than I did swimming in the Gulf of Kutch.

In spite of the drought and the heat we had a really marvellous time. Indian hospitality is proverbial, and the Jam Sahib was not only a princely host but one of the kindest and most thoughtful. In his silver carriage, which he had expressly made for the Durbar and which cost 75,000 rupees, in his long coat of white brocade and his blue

turban set with diamonds and emeralds as large as pigeon's eggs, and a £15,000 pearl necklace round his neck, he remained in my memory as the last word in Oriental magnificence. When I next met him it was in the Fish Department at Harrods and he was attired in a blue suit and a straw hat. The national costume of Imperial Britain seemed an outrage to that memory, the Fish Department an incongruous background after glittering Delhi. But I am not sure that "Ranji," the popular hero of cricket-loving England, was not a happier man in his flat over Harrods than the Jam Sahib of Nawanagar, who must often have suffered from the loneliness of rulers and potentates with minds in advance of their time and their country.

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## CHAPTER VII

### KERRY SOCIETY—THE SKELLIGS

GOING away to other lands makes one appreciate one's own all the more on returning to it. The coming back to Caragh never disappointed. Nothing I had seen on my travels ever thrilled me quite so much as the first glimpse of the Lake glinting through the trees from the narrow winding road above the shores, the view from the terrace of the fir-clad island and the blue encircling mountains. Life in London became less irksome for the feeling that within a sixteen-hour journey lay an enchanted land to which one could repair at any time. Travelling to Ireland was less harassing in those days than it is now. There were day-boats from Fishguard to Rosslare and there were no irritating Customs to be faced at dawn. Visitors could come, and often did, for week-ends. I myself thought nothing of the journey, which I have difficulty in screwing myself up to at all now, but which I often then undertook five or six times a year.

In spite of its remoteness, there was plenty of society in Kerry in pre-war days. All the houses, large and small, were lived in, not closed and shuttered as they are to-day, or mere burnt-out walls standing as tragic monuments to Irish freedom. The Kenmares were living at Killarney House, the enormous red-brick structure built by the last Earl, which incidentally ruined him and

which was accidentally burnt to the ground in 1912—a tragedy for the Kenmares and for Killarney, because, although the red brick did not harmonize with the wonderful frame in which it was set, it was a stately and impressive pile, the charred and blackened remains of which disfigure to-day the glorious scenery of Killarney's lower lake. For unfortunately, instead of pulling down the burnt-out shell and rebuilding on a smaller scale on the same site, the present Kenmares retired to the stables, which had been the original house of the family and which they did up and lived in until a few years ago, when they put up the shutters and went to live in London.

Nobody ever loved Kerry more or worked harder for her benefit than Lady Kenmare, who, as Lady Castlerosse, when she first came to live at Killarney House, started schools and industries of every description and who later raised thousands of pounds for the Lady Dudley Nursing Scheme. As gifted as she is charming, in her tireless efforts to bring prosperity and happiness to the poor she showed how understanding and sympathetic an Englishwoman married to an Irishman can be in the land of her adoption. Except for an occasional visit of a few days, Killarney now, alas ! knows her no more and is in more ways than one the poorer for her absence.

Muckross, the equally lovely home for generations of the Herbert family, had been bought at that time by Mr. Bourn, a Californian millionaire, for his only daughter, Maud, the wife of Arthur Vincent. Newly married, young and rich, the Vincents entertained royally and gardened imperially, transforming, in typically lavish American fashion, the face of the land, sweeping away forests in a night, clothing in a day the mountain sides

with colour, producing acres of grassy lawns with the wave of a magician's wand, until the gods, jealous as always of successful enterprise in Ireland, dealt ill-fated Muckross a shattering knock-out blow—Maud Vincent dying tragically of pneumonia in New York. Her husband, finding it impossible after her death to keep up the place as they had done in the past, offered it, in 1932, to the Nation. The Government accepted the gift without having the slightest idea of what to do with it. Some day, perhaps, the youth of Ireland, wandering by the shores of the lake, roaming the wooded mountain slopes, will realize the beauty of its marvellous possession. Meanwhile, the house stands silent and deserted ; the lovely gardens are, however, kept up and have not as yet assumed the detached, unnatural air peculiar to State-owned shrubs and flowers which belong to everybody and to nobody.

Lakeview, another charming place on the lower lake, now being run by his son as an hotel, was in those days the home of Sir Morgan O'Connell, a kinsman of the Liberator and himself a splendid specimen of the best type of Kerry landlord : a fine sportsman, genial and courteous, beloved by his neighbours and his tenants, with an unfailing sense of humour and a wonderful collection of Irish stories. One of his own experiences which always amused me was of his first visit to a smart London restaurant in the days when cold storage was in its infancy. It was late spring, and a roast grouse was brought him by a waiter. "A sitting hen!" he exclaimed in horror. "Good God! take her away at once."

Over the mountains from Killarney, on Kenmare Bay, the lovely fjord-like inlet of the sea which stretches inland for thirty miles between two long



ranges of blue hills, the Colombs were living at Dromquinna, the Hoods at Dromore Castle, Colonel Warden at Derryquin, which he had recently bought from the Blands, while to entrancing Garinish Island, where tree-ferns flourish with the same luxuriance as in their native land, came every summer Lord Dunraven, a great sportsman whose interests and activities covered an extraordinarily wide field, a great Irishman who lived his life spaciously and completely, and whose love for his country showed itself in practical schemes carried out for her benefit.

On Dingle Bay, another beautiful inlet of the sea, at Callinafercy, were my brother and his wife (he had married again in 1906, Meriel, daughter of Sir George Hodson), and at Kilcoleman Abbey were my sister Mary and her husband Sir William Godfrey. The Robert Fitzgeralds were living at Ballyard, the Blennerhassetts at Ballyseedy, the Crosbies at Ballyheigue Castle; while at the Barracks in Tralee, the depot of the 4th Battalion of the Munsters, the Kerry militia held every summer their training to the accompaniment of dances, picnics and gymkhanas. A crowded life for those who liked it and a new one for people who, before the advent of motors, had lived remote and secluded though in the same county, separated from each other by mountain ranges, seldom meeting, almost unknown to one another.

Places as well as people became suddenly accessible, even the Skelligs, those shadowy rocks rising out of the Atlantic on the distant horizon, which I had always longed to visit, being brought within easy reach by motor-boat. From Valentia Island we steered one day our course through the narrow channel between the black rocks and the green cliffs of the Kerry shore out towards the

West, where two distant peaks rose dimly out of the ocean's vast expanse. Gradually their outline grew sharper and more forbidding, and the sea, which during our three-hour voyage had been as peaceful as the surface of a river, began to heave and churn. Soon, the Small Skellig stood above our little boat, sharp and sinister, with stupendous cliffs, its jagged heights of reddish marble a seething multitude of circling birds, huge waves dashing with horrid ominousness against the cruel and defiant rocks, rising like a vast buttress from the sea, protecting the gannet's breeding sanctuary from man's intrusion. Beyond, on the right, the Greater Skellig, high and green, raised its sea-pink covered slopes. Ever more impressive it grew, the nearer we approached beneath the overhanging heights, frowning down upon the cockleshell in which, oblivious of our nothingness, we steered towards its savagely inhospitable shore. Even on this perfect, windless St. Martin's summer day the landing seemed formidable enough. Later on, when great gales come sweeping up the Atlantic, when whirlwinds rage and the waters leap and beat tumultuously against the eternally immovable rock, it is so impracticable that, the previous winter, the keepers of the lighthouse—the only inhabitants of this lonely outpost—had remained for 107 days without communication from the outer world.

Under the dark and overhanging rock beneath which we eventually moored, a winding road, following the outline of the projecting cliff, leads round the sides of a fearful chasm, in which the waves break with a deep, thundering boom, to the lower lighthouse. On the right a flight of steps, 690 in number, broken in places, exquisitely lined and cushioned in banks of greenest thrift, ascends the dizzy height, on which has stood throughout

the centuries the strangely interesting monastic settlement dedicated to St. Michael, of the history of which so little is known to-day.

In his *History of Ireland* Keating alludes to it as "a kind of rock situated a few leagues in the sea and since St. Patrick's time much frequented by way of piety and devotion"—a statement for which he quotes, however, no more authority than Dr. Smith, in his *History of Kerry*, gives for his: that the monastery was founded by St. Finan the Leper, whose cell on Lough Corrane on the mainland it greatly resembles. The earliest authentic record of the monastic settlement would seem, then, to occur in A.D. 838, when we read in *The Wars of the Danes* that "Scelig Michil was also plundered by them and they took Eitgall with them into captivity and it was by miracles he escaped, and he died of hunger and thirst with them." This allusion, with two other dates, A.D. 950 and A.D. 1044, referred to in the *Annals of the Four Masters* as being the years of the death of Blathmhac of Scelig and of Aedh of Scelig Michil, together with a description by Giraldus Cambrensis of "an island in the Southern part of Munster with a church dedicated to St. Michael, famed for its orthodox sanctity from very ancient times," appear to contain all the available authentic information of the island.

From the eastern end of a flat rock known as "Christ's Saddle" spring steps leading to the Monastery, which stands 650 feet over sea-level, fortified by retaining walls, some 5 feet wide in parts, and enclosing seven beehive cells, two of which were used as oratories. The more modern Church of St. Michael, in the structure of which mortar has been used, was in a state of dilapidation, whereas the original cells, being built of dry stone

and of "beehive" design, remained, after a lapse of 900 years, in a very good state of preservation.

Outside the Monastery stands a solitary cell which was in all probability a penitent one, and immediately beyond are the recreation grounds, some 150 yards square in extent. The Monastery itself encloses an area of three-fourths of an Irish acre. In continuation of the main steps leading from the road up to it are other steps leading to the south-east side of the rock, and to a landing recently renovated and used at the present day. Although time has much defaced the regularity of these steps, there yet remains sufficient evidence to support the theory of this being the landing originally used by the monks. Leading from the cells to this landing is the "Way of the Cross," the cross itself being embedded in soil but its base just visible, with five stones, arranged horizontally, overhanging a larger stone, representing the five wounds received by our Lord. Along this Way of the Cross, from Christ's Saddle or the Garden of Passion, a little green valley sheltering between two precipitous and rocky peaks, the tourist of to-day, with the pilgrim of old, climbs up the almost perpendicular steps to the "Stone of Pain," commemorating the moment when Christ, bowing under the weight of the cross, sank to the ground. From this point, at the edge of a precipice, hundreds of feet above the sea, the highest peak of the island runs up into the sky like some vast spire, girt with buttresses and pinnacles, with fantastically shaped rocks projecting like gargoyles from the face of the cliff, one of which, roughly hewn into the shape of a cross and named "The Rock of Woman's Wailing," celebrates the scene in the walk to Calvary when Christ turns and says: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not

for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children."

Holes and stones cut in the rock lead up the perilous heights to other stations, some of which can only be safely reached on hands and knees—piety and adventure ever luring the pilgrim on to yet more hazardous enterprise. On and still on we see them climb, each upward step bringing the soul a holier message of reverence and awe, until at last is reached the little passage leading from the garden of the monks to the plateau, on which are situated the Church of St. Michael, the oratories and the beehive cells, those curiously shaped dwellings of the monks of old, who sought and found in these hermit retreats the spiritual strength to fight and conquer the powers of evil and darkness. Of these ruins it has been truly said that "so sad and solemn is the scene that none should approach it but the pilgrim and the penitent." And though we live in a world to-day of few pilgrimages and of even less repentance, trivial indeed must be the mind which could view this holy spot without a feeling of reverence and solemnity. In their desolate beauty, in their primitive austerity, these buildings, set like some rough and uncut precious stone in a jewelled radiance of surrounding sea and sky, seemed essentially a place of prayer. Unconsciously the feeling stole over one of being softly drawn into that state of contemplation in which the monks of old found refuge from a life of sin and strife. To remain, one felt, would mean being shaped like the surrounding stones into a calm and eternal holiness—to return to that world which, through the little window of the oratory, grew ever more remote, became increasingly impossible. And so amid the ruins we sat and sat, and gazed beyond

the sea-pink covered slope into the great immensity, wrapped in that silence, beauty and wonder described in the picturesque language alike of the Gael and the Arab as the "Three Veils of God." The abbot's grave lay at our feet. Beyond, a primitive and almost shapeless cross stood out between the crumbling oratory and a beehive cell, its low and simple doorway leading into a circular chamber, the darkness broken by a tiny window, above which the form of a cross could just be seen. On the height above, more cells ; on the right, the cashel or enclosing wall in still perfect repair, rising sheer out of the edge of the precipice, 700 feet above the sea. A place of the dead if you will, yet not a place of sorrow ; for the Skelligs are of Ireland, and in Ireland the dead are ever more alive than the living. The body of the abbot may once, indeed, have lain beneath the mossy ground, but his spirit was hovering on that September afternoon over the ruined place of prayer. The gentle monks were murmuring their orisons, chanting their daily song of praise, each in his hermit cell ; while the great white birds, skimming the surface of the opalescent sea below, were surely the same as those which flapped their wings and shrilly screamed when, over eleven hundred years ago, the murderous Danes, descending on the rock, carried away the hapless Eitgall into a miserable captivity. Then, as now, in boundless silence and in boundless space, the sea lay shimmering in all the sheen and radiance of the opal, while away in the distance stretched the soft, poetic mountains of Kerry—that mysteriously appealing land which takes the stranger to her breast and tears the heart out of those who love her best. Time has brought but little change. Between those simple, holy monks and their successors, the

lighthouse-keepers of our own day, keeping their lonely vigil on the "last of God's fortresses in the Western sea," some bond of union may still be found. The beacon warning the sailor of danger to his craft shines not less brilliantly to-day than that spiritual beacon which, in the early days of Christianity, shone forth like a star from those remotest shores of Ireland and sent missionaries all the world over, to point the way of salvation to those sailing on the perilous sea of sin and temptation. Philosophies have come and gone. Religions have had their ebb and flow. The stars still move, however, on their unchanging course. God is in his Heaven still, and although we may no longer agree with the poet that all is therefore well with the world, we find ourselves to-day, in spite of our vaunted progress and achievement, with more knowledge perhaps, certainly with less faith, still helpless in the face of circumstance, wondering and

Watching as a patient, sleepless eremite  
The moving waters at their priest-like task  
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores.

## CHAPTER VIII

### EGYPT—THE BUILDING OF THE ARD-NA-SIDHE—SOME KERRY FAIRIES

IN 1912 Home's grandmother died at the age of ninety. She was a remarkable old lady, who, until she was eighty-six, had never had an illness in her life. Her health and longevity were doubtless due to the regularity of the life she led and the early hours she kept. Married at the age of twenty, she separated from her husband, Sir Home, two years later. Although she was extremely good-looking, she never had another love affair and never evinced the slightest desire to marry again—the one experience, she always maintained, having been quite enough. Returning to her mother, Mrs. Barnewall, she devoted herself entirely to the upbringing of her only son, who unfortunately proved even more impossible than her husband, repaying her devotion with ingratitude and abuse.

On her mother's death she set up house with her brother, Captain Charles Barnewall, in Granville Place, Portman Square; and in 1875, when Sir Seton separated from his wife (who was the only daughter of Montagu Scott, M.P. for Brighton), she took charge of Home, who was their only son and who lived with her until his marriage to me. During the whole of that time she never lunched or dined out or went to a party of any description. She never went out except in a closed carriage, and only left London in the summer, when she took



lodgings for five or six weeks at Folkestone or Eastbourne. This monotonous existence seems to have agreed with them both, as Uncle Charles, who had left the Army at the age of twenty-seven because he was supposed to be dying, eventually lived to seventy-two, while Granny retained her looks and her vitality to the end of her life.

The Barnewalls are an Irish family of which Lord Trimlestown is the head, and on her mother's side she was Portuguese : a combination of races which may have accounted for a vivacity and sprightliness unusual in old ladies of the Victorian era. When, at the age of eighty-six, she got her first illness, she was terrified she might die. The doctor diagnosed it as stone, and a specialist, Sir William Bennett, was called in. He advised an immediate operation. Granny shrieked and, clinging to Home and me, implored us not to allow it. In the circumstances there was nothing to be done but to let her have her way. Sir William was furious. "She will die in agonies in twenty-four hours," he said, as he walked out of the room. No sooner had he gone than Granny sat up and asked for a mutton chop. Whether she got it or not, I don't remember, but I know that within a week I was taking her out shopping, and that she never had a recurrence of her illness, nor did she contract any other until four years later, when she really died more of old age than of any actual disease.

I often used to think, if we had been Christian Scientists what a marvellous cure might have been claimed ; and really we would have been justified in attributing to faith a recovery which nobody was ever able to account for.

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The following year we spent part of an unforgettable winter in Egypt, feeling, as often happens

with any slight increase of income, a great deal more opulent than we really were; living in expensive hotels and camping, even more expensively, in the desert, with an enormous retinue of dragomen, camels and donkeys. Egypt will always remain in my memory as a land of golden days and radiant nights. Nobody who has not seen the moon in the Valley of the Nile has ever seen the real thing—the pale, wan planet that lights Europe dimly and uncertainly throughout the night being but a dim reflection of the African moon which illuminates the sphinx and floods the desert with a brilliance which has to be seen to be believed.

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We had moved the previous year from Ovington Square to 2, Cheyne Walk, a tiny Queen Anne house with a powdering closet and a cottage in the garden at the back. In the following summer we embarked on the building of Ard-nasidhe, a real house this time, built of stone and mortar, with a real architect in the shape of Mr. Morley Horder, chosen out of a number of competitors chiefly for his romantic appearance, which I felt somehow would be reflected in his designs and work. I wanted an inconsequent house and yet one that would give an impression of permanence in a landscape which changed its appearance as often as I changed my mind about the plans. No architect, I am sure, ever had so much to contend with, and none ever emerged more amiably out of the ordeal, not even uttering a protest when submitting a drawing which I saw one day, to my horror, was numbered “103.”

The new house was even more beautifully situated than the wooden one, which, although only a few hundred yards away, was not visible from it, being

completely hidden by an intervening wood ; which was as well, as the hideousness and unsuitability of the latter was afflicting me more every day. Fortunately, being made of wood and iron, it was removable, and, having been disposed of to a local carpenter, it was later re-erected in Killorglin, where, for some time, it served as a Sinn Fein Club, being eventually burnt to the ground by the Black and Tans.

Everything connected with the building of the new house was, as far as possible, of Irish origin, an exception having to be made with regard to the slates, which came from Westmorland, the quarries on Valentia Island being closed and no other grey slates of good quality being available in Ireland. The contractor was a native of Killorglin and the workmen were all local. The stone came from Glenbeigh, the gravel from some derelict land on the other side of the Lake. At least, the contractor thought it was derelict until he received the following delightful protest from its bed-ridden owner—who, I need hardly say, received, in due course, the compensation so forcibly claimed :

Mr. O Sullivan I mean to know, what claim had you or who gave you permission to come in to my land, myself and father have possessed those fifty years, and many a pounds rent paid for it. If I had my health I would shue ye honestly for compensation as I did Kenedy for the railway fee, he took me twice to Killarney and did his best, I being an old occuper with a strong claim an my rent paid I got it in spite of him, its easy to wrong me these six years in my bed. Not a man in Kerry would alow you into his land and make a grave for his cattle and leave it so.

Take notice ; if you dont seccure the pit out of

danger in time if my cows is clifted into it you are  
my mark

a stitch in time saves nine

from James ——

Caragh Lake.

At the back of the house was a fairy "rath," one of those curious hills often found in Ireland, with subterranean passages with stone-built walls leading into a large central cave, the origin of which is a mystery. Usually known as Danish forts, it is more than likely that the ancient Irish lived on top of these mounds in wood and wattle huts, surrounded by palisades for keeping out wolves, and that they used the cave for storing their grain and other possessions in winter, or for taking refuge in themselves when attacked by their enemies. Whoever built them, or whatever use they may have been put to in the past, these "raths" are regarded to this day by the peasants as the home of the *Sidhe*, "the people of the hill," who, according to some authorities, are the spirits of the *Tuatha de danaan* (the original mythical inhabitants of Ireland), and according to others, fallen angels who, cast out of Heaven for their sins, yet not evil enough for Hell, are allowed to occupy an intermediate space in Ireland, living in subterranean palaces into which mortals have occasionally been known to penetrate, in which they have found wonderful treasures of gold and silver and conversed with cats and greyhounds, which, according to tradition, possessed, like all animals before the introduction of Christianity, faculties of speech and reason.

In Kerry, the belief in fairies has lingered longer than in most parts of Ireland. Unfortunately, however, education, with its inevitably blighting

effect on the imagination, is doing its best—or rather, its worst—to undermine it; so that even though “pookhies” still dance on mossy raths and red-haired “banshees” shriek warnings of death, the awe in which the dwellings of these strange and supernatural beings were once held is so rapidly dying out that I was able to supervise, without a protest, the opening up of the “fairy fort” and the cutting down of a “fairy thorn” by men whose fathers and grandfathers would have flatly declined to lay hands on either. My surprise, therefore, was great when two of the labourers engaged in digging the foundations of the house, and to whom I had tentatively suggested exploring the fort, promptly followed me up the hill and began to dig round the opening of one of the passages leading into the cave. No sooner was the entrance clear than one of them lay down flat on the ground and, crawling on all fours, disappeared from sight into the bowels of the earth. The other man exhibiting no concern, I considered it advisable also to maintain an attitude of indifference although fully conscious that, a few years ago, such an act would certainly have been attended with alarming consequences. Soon after, however, the man’s heels having reappeared, and these being presently followed by his head, I was able to inquire not only as to his discoveries but as to the motive which had induced him to undertake what must have been a singularly unpleasant expedition, judging from the condition of his clothes and the spiders’ nests reposing in his hair. Unfortunately, so far as his investigations went, there was nothing startling to reveal, the long narrow passage being one of five originally leading into the central cave, the roof of which, however, had fallen in and blocked his progress. As to his motive, much as I regret to record it, I

am obliged to admit it was wholly and entirely mercenary. "I thought," he replied, as he gingerly removed the woolly nests from his head, "there could be money inside," voicing the tradition of buried treasure which prevails all over Kerry, as well as the altogether modern supremacy of the passion for gain over the power of superstition.

After this episode I felt sufficiently encouraged to suggest the removal of a thorn-tree which seriously impeded the view from the house, but to which I had long been resigned, as one resigns oneself to Fate and all the immovable circumstances of life. Again, however, there was no remonstrance; and as the tree fell with a crash on the mossy bank, if any fear of horrible consequences was felt by those present, it was felt by me alone, the men who had done the unholy deed resuming their pipes, shouldering their saws and hatchets, and strolling back to their ordinary work. Personally, for years I never passed the spot where the tree once stood without an almost imperceptible shudder of apprehension; for, after all, the thorn is a fairy tree, and "Anna Grace," of Sir Samuel Ferguson's ballad, is not the only mortal who has been spirited away from her companions by

the silent fairy crowd,

Like a river in the air gliding round.  
Nor scream can raise nor prayer can any say,  
But wild, wild the terror of the speechless three,  
For they feel fair Anna Grace drawn silently away—  
By whom they dare not look to see.

Where such a tragic fate overtook poor Anna Grace and her three companions, who, after all, had only been guilty of dancing beneath the fairy thorn, one may perhaps be pardoned for feeling a certain apprehensiveness when it came to cutting

one down. As a matter of fact, however, the punishment for such a deed, if unpleasant, does not appear as severe as might be expected, judging by another poem (by Allingham) in which we read of fairies who

Have planted thorn-trees  
For pleasure here and there ;  
Is any man so daring  
As dig them up in spite  
He shall find their sharpest thorns  
In his bed at night.

Altogether, seeing the vindictive nature of fairies and their uncompromising attitude towards the transgressors of their laws, it is perhaps not to be regretted that, though still inhabiting the earth, they should be gradually losing something of their power.

At the same time, if the wholesome awe usually connected with the supernatural element in life appears to be dying out, on the principle of the Kerry man who denied the power of the priest to turn him, as threatened, into a rat, but who all the same took the precaution of shutting up the cat at night, a certain respect for the fairies still prevails, which is perhaps as well. For if in the past they have displayed an altogether uncharitable tendency to take babies out of their cradles and to substitute for them fairy changelings of uncertain temper ; to lure newly married women away from their husbands, leaving counterfeit corpses in their places ; to administer blows to strong men which result in paralysis and blindness ; to bewitch cows so that their milk fails and to blight and destroy whole crops of potatoes, it must be remembered that they are also capable of rewarding virtue, as in the case of Hanafin and his cows, one of the many delightful fairy tales collected in Kerry by the late Mr. Jeremiah Curtin.

Hanafin, it appears, was a farmer living near Dingle, owning a large herd of cows, which were driven up every morning to be milked in front of the house. It happened, however, that for several days in succession the tub into which the milk was poured by the girls was mysteriously overturned and the milk spilled. Hanafin's wife was naturally exceedingly indignant, but in spite of every precaution the milk continued to be upset. One morning, however, as Hanafin was walking along the road past a fairy fort, he heard a child crying inside it and a woman's voice say, "Be quiet a while, Hanafin's cows are going home; we'll soon have milk in plenty." Now Hanafin, being a wise man, said nothing, but went home and personally supervised the milking, with the result that, on the usual overturning of the tub, he stopped his wife in the middle of her scolding by telling her it was no fault of the girl, who on this occasion had been pushed by one of the cows against the tub. "Leave it to me," he said. "I'll try and manage this business."

The following morning, on hearing the child crying again in the fort, he, "like the brave man that he was," went inside. He saw no one, but he said: "A child is crying for milk. A cow of mine will calve to-morrow. I'll let no one milk that cow; you can do what you like with her milk."

The tub was never turned over again, and for two years Hanafin prospered in every way, taking good care of the cow and never letting a girl or woman milk her. Unfortunately, however, Hanafin, being a Kerry man, was also soft-hearted, and, some of his neighbours getting into trouble, he went security for them, with the result that the creditors came down on him and the bailiff arrived one day in order to drive off his cattle. Hanafin



thereupon repaired to the fairy fort and said : " I'm going to lose all my cattle, but I'll try to keep the cow I gave you, so that the child may have the milk."

Three bailiffs came, and went down to the pastures across the field, but when they drove the cows up as far as the fairy fort each bailiff " was caught and thrown hither and over by people he couldn't see ; one minute he was on one side of the ditch and the next minute on the other side. They were so roughly handled and bruised that they were hardly alive, and they not seeing who or what was doing it. The cattle, raising their tails, bawled and ran off to the pastures." The following morning ten policemen and bailiffs went to take Hanafin's cattle, with, however, identically the same result, " so that they barely left the place alive." Never again did police or bailiff meddle with Hanafin's cows, and, above all, the creditors never collected the money.

Occasionally the fairies, being Irish, display a certain sense of humour, as in the case of John Connors, a farmer who lived near Killarney, whose delight was so great at being presented by his wife, after seven daughters, with a son, that he broke his spade in the ditch for joy and started off to the next parish to find sponsors for the christening, not considering anybody in his own parish worthy of the honour. He had, however, not gone very far before meeting a stranger riding on a white horse, attired in red knee-breeches, a swallow-tailed coat and a tall hat, who asked him where he was going.

" I'm going," said Connor, " to Beaufort to find sponsors for my young son."

" Oh, you foolish man," said the stranger, " you left the road a mile behind you. Turn back and take the left hand."

John Connors, having done as directed, had not ridden very far along the new road when he met the same gentleman again, who once more directed him on his way. As a matter of fact, all that night he kept meeting the stranger, who finally invited him to his house and insisted on his staying with him till the morning. Once Connors was asleep, the stranger took his clothes, formed a corpse in exact imitation of the owner, put the clothes on it, tied the body to the horse and, leading it outside, turned its head towards home, keeping Connors himself in bed for three weeks.

The horse in due course found its way home, and the people, seeing the corpse on its back, took it for Connors, to whom they gave a great wake that night, "everybody mourning and lamenting for him, for wasn't he a good man and the father of a large family?"

Three weeks later Connors was awakened by his host and told to go home.

"But where are my clothes?" asked Connors, sitting up in bed and looking round him.

"I know nothing of your clothes," said the stranger, "and the sooner you get out of this the better."

"But God help me," said Connors, "how am I to go home without my clothes? If I had a shirt itself it wouldn't be so bad, but to go without a rag at all on me!"

"Don't be talking," said the man; "take a sheet and be off with you. I have no time to lose on the like of you."

John, being afraid of the man, took the sheet and went out. Now it is the custom in Ireland, when anybody dies, to sprinkle holy water on the clothes of the deceased and to give them for God's sake to the poor, thereby ensuring their having them

for their own use in another world. So that when John Connors appeared in his native town in a sheet, the people who saw him, on recovering from the shock, rushed to his wife and accused her of not having given his clothes to the poor, since his ghost was roaming around in nakedness.

"Indeed," said his wife, "I did give them away ; it must be that the man I gave them to didn't wear them to Mass, and that is why my poor husband is naked in the other world " ; whereupon she went for the neighbour and proceeded to revile him.

"Bad luck to you, you heathen," said she. "I did not think you the man to leave my poor John naked in the other world. You neither went to Mass in the clothes I gave you, nor sprinkled holy water on them."

The neighbour having, however, proved to her satisfaction that he had performed all the necessary rites over the garments, the widow returned home, only to receive herself that same night a visitation from the ghost. Overcome with terror she hid herself and her children under the bedclothes, leaving John tapping at the window while she offered up prayers for the repose of his soul.

Whenever Connors appeared it was always with the same result ; even the doctor, having seen him through the window, refusing to open the door to him. At last he betook himself to the priest, whose housekeeper, having opened the door, fell in a fit on the stairs on seeing the apparition. The priest, hearing the noise, ran out, and, finding himself face to face with the ghost of the corpse over whom he had said Mass, refused to believe him alive.

"If you are," said he, "where are your clothes ? "

"I don't know where they are," said Connors,

"or how they went from me, but I haven't them, sure enough."

"Go into the kitchen," said the priest. "I'll bring you clothes, and then you must tell me what happened to you."

Connors having related his adventures, "'Tis Daniel O'Donohue, the fairy chief—King of Loch-lein (Killarney)—that played the trick on you," said the priest. "Why didn't you get sponsors at home in this parish for your son as you did for your daughters?" And having duly admonished him for his pride and his wilfulness the priest accompanied him to his wife's house, where, in answer to their knocking, they were only met with renewed prayers for the repose of Connors' soul. After some time, however, the priest prevailed on her to open the door and finally succeeded in convincing her that her husband was really there in the flesh.

Once restored to the bosom of his family, it is not surprising to hear that after all his adventures in the sheet, "no matter how large his family was in after years, John Connors never went from home again to find sponsors."

Taking it all round it would be a drab world if there were no fairies in it, no supernatural region where nothing is too preposterous to occur ; for, in spite of the fact that we live in a proverbially materialistic age, for each of us individually this land takes shape, according to our own imaginings : but whether we locate it in this world or in the next, and whether we call its inhabitants gods or fairies, matters little. The essential fact remains that earth-bound humanity, seeking to escape from the sordid cares and anxieties of everyday life, still dreams in one form or another of a world of fantastic happenings, which, in some unaccountable manner, exercise a mysterious influence on one's

life and actions. Certainly one cannot imagine Kerry without this other world, beautiful, mysterious Kerry, where, if anywhere, the fairies

Live on crispy pancakes  
Of yellow tide foam :  
Some in the reeds  
Of the black mountain lake  
With frogs for their watch-dogs  
All night awake.

## CHAPTER IX

POLITICS—A NATIONALIST MEETING—THE IRISH CLUB—  
VICEREGAL LODGE—LLOYD GEORGE—THE NATIONAL  
VOLUNTEERS

TO be suspected of Nationalist sympathies in Kerry in 1913 was almost as bad in the eyes of one's Unionist neighbours as being suspected of murder. Ever since I had thought about the matter at all I had been a Home Ruler, but I have never been able to take politics with the same seriousness with which my "die-hard" neighbours took their Unionism, and I have always thought it would be a dull world if we all held the same opinions. But when I once said so to a friend with whom I had been having a fierce political argument, she replied heatedly: "No, I don't. I want everybody to think as I do because I *know* I'm right."

Being totally lacking in a similar conviction of my own infallibility on any subject, I discreetly kept my opinions as much as possible to myself, except for one memorable lapse when I expressed them at length in the *Daily Mail* in a letter unfortunately published on the one day of all others when the whole County were returning, in a flushed and exalted condition, from Belfast, where they had been signing Sir Edward Carson's Covenant with pens dipped, it was said, in blood from their own veins—proving once more how impossible it is to be serious in Ireland without being ridiculous.

Believing, as they undoubtedly did, that the passing of the Home Rule Act would mean the end of Ireland—or at any rate the end of their own class, which was all of Ireland that mattered to them—their feelings were naturally outraged by my letter, which they all read in the train on their homeward journey. That I should hold opinions so utterly at variance with theirs seemed to them a betrayal of my class. Their indignation was intense; and when, soon after, I attended John Redmond's great Nationalist meeting in Kerry, got up as a counterblast to the Carson show in the North, my ostracism was complete. Quite useless were my protestations that nothing but curiosity had been my motive in attending that momentous gathering. In vain I sought for some explanation of the fact that to attend a political meeting in Ireland is to be guilty of a crime against society. In England I had listened on various occasions in Hyde Park, and even within the hallowed precincts of the Albert Hall, to fanatical outbursts of Socialists, Suffragettes, and Anarchists, without in any way polluting the crystal purity of my principles. The sole result of my most reasoned argument was the reiteration of the fact that in Ireland people brought up in Unionist circles did not attend Nationalist meetings. Why they should not do so, nobody went to the length of explaining. Briefly and finally, "it was not done."

The fact remains, however, that I did it, and I shall always be glad that I did, even though it ended in my falling through the platform in the middle of Mr. Redmond's speech and narrowly escaped ending my career in a manner which would certainly have commended itself to my neighbours as thoroughly justifiable and deserved.

Apart from this tragic catastrophe the expedition

was a great success. All along the beautiful coast road skirting Dingle Bay we followed in the wake of the Nationalist leader, past groups of cheering men, women and children waving green flags, to Cahirciveen, where we alighted at the hotel. A gargantuan meal was in progress. Everywhere were joints—even on the stairs—and everywhere people eating and drinking ; boiled mutton, roast duck and ham, all on the same plate, appearing to be the favourite menu.

In a private room, the Leader, his wife, his trusty henchman, Pat O'Brien, and various followers were tossing off champagne and claret. While we were being introduced to him, Mr. Morley Horder penetrated, with typically British indiscretion, to the kitchen. What he saw he never related, but he returned pale and silent and, refusing all nourishment, sat, remote and uncompromising, among the potato skins and the gravy dishes on the stairs.

In the street outside, cavalcades of the " Ancient Order of Hibernians," with green sashes slung across their shoulders, galloped wildly up and down, while Christian Brother bands played patriotic, if slightly discordant, melodies. Banners inscribed " We will have Home Rule " stretched across the road. Over the gaily decorated platform outside the Carnegie Hall, one proclaiming " Iveragh solid for Home Rule " waved in the breeze. It was, as a matter of fact, the only thing in our immediate vicinity that was at all solid. The platform, tightly wedged with humanity, as a way was forcibly made on it for us by our local M.P., swayed ominously. Throughout the opening speeches it quivered sympathetically with the patriotic emotion displayed by the speakers. No sooner had Mr. Redmond risen to his feet, at the



front, than the occupants of the back rows began to press forward, with the result that, the planks beneath us giving way, we found ourselves crashing through space on to what appeared to be the floor of Hell, a shrieking, cursing, trampling mass, who eventually found themselves struggling on the ground among the empty porter barrels on which the platform had originally been raised.

Were we dead or were we not? A moment of painful uncertainty, after which, disentangling our mixed-up limbs from those of our neighbours, we scrambled to our feet, finding, to our surprise, that few of us were greatly damaged, but amazed to hear the meeting proceeding as if no cataclysm had occurred. This, we subsequently discovered, was due not so much to the heartlessness of the speaker as to the sang-froid displayed by the chairman, who, from a position of safety in front, in order to avoid a panic, had informed the public, as we disappeared from view, that "a few people had temporarily left the back of the platform."

From a window through which we were eventually hauled into the basement, we mounted to an upper storey and on to a flat roof, from which we listened to Mr. Redmond's speech. Eloquent, fervent and sincere, it left one with a feeling of hopefulness that at last the ship was really at the harbour's mouth and Ireland at the beginning of a new era; even if, at the back of one's mind, one found oneself wondering whether, in his contemptuous allusions to Ulster and Sir Edward Carson, the Nationalist Leader was not making the fatal mistake of underestimating the strength of the enemy.

"Implacable, irreconcilable, based on neither argument nor reason, its root the old spirit of ascendancy—a brutal and arrogant determination to

override the will of Parliament and of the country at any risk,” was the Ulster opposition a thing to be lightly dismissed as “ humbug,” the tactics of the Carsonites to be described as the “ methods of desperate, broken and resourceless men ” ?

That Mr. Redmond honestly believed it to be so was obvious.

“ The man is mad,” he remarked with an air of finality of Sir Edward Carson, as we subsequently walked across the square, when the meeting was over, to the hotel for further refreshment.

I remember asking him how he liked his audience.

“ They are too intelligent,” he replied, “ and take up points too quickly.”

The interruptions had certainly been trying and the Leader was obviously annoyed, which perhaps was not surprising seeing that Mrs. Redmond’s foot had been badly hurt in the collapse of the platform and that somebody’s blood had been shed profusely over her coat.

As we motored home in the gathering dusk, Mr. Morley Horder nursing a damaged shin-bone, his English Liberal, Home Rule convictions temporarily abandoned, kept gasping, “ What a country ! ” assuring us that people who were incapable of constructing even a platform could not possibly be trusted to construct a political constitution.

Perhaps he was right. I don’t know. Since then much water has flowed beneath the bridges of Ireland. Mr. Redmond died and the Nationalist party went down. The Convention, which proved that, outside Ulster, Unionists and Nationalists were not irreconcilable, collapsed when the new Home Rule Bill promised by Lloyd George failed to materialize. In the elections held soon after, or rather, not held, since there was practically no

contest, Ireland threw herself unresistingly into the arms of Sinn Fein, which has since become openly Republican.

What the eventual result of it all would be, who could say? Whether Ireland would prove capable of governing herself or not, England at any rate had proved her incapacity to do it for her.

I suppose it was by constant insistence on this fairly obvious fact that I came to be labelled in Unionist circles as a Sinn Feiner, although conscious of no more startling political conviction than this. Not being of the stuff of which martyrs are made, it is not, however, one for which I was prepared to die. And in Ireland, if you have political principles, you are unfortunately always expected to die for them. To have no prejudices, to be possessed of an open mind, means that, sooner or later, you will be suspected by all parties in the country of dishonesty; of "hunting with the hounds and running with the hare."

Every movement in Ireland, from the starting of a creamery to the studying of Celtic literature, begins in the same way—on strictly non-political, non-sectarian lines, and ends in bloodshed and fire; while to identify yourself with neither side is to live and die in the shadow of suspicion.

Feeling I might as well be hanged for a sheep as for a lamb, I plunged with enthusiasm into Irish politics, proclaiming my Nationalist sympathies on every possible occasion—usually with disastrous results, the most humiliating of which was the remark of a hairdresser who, in the course of a shampoo, reproachfully told me he had never yet met a *lady* who was a Home Ruler.

I made a great many enemies and lost a number of friends, incidentally consoling myself with the

reflection that friendships so easily lost were in any case not worth preserving.

It takes so much energy to maintain an unpopular point of view that I found myself gradually drifting out of Unionist circles into Home Rule ones. I joined various leagues and societies for the purpose of supporting Irish freedom, and dined frequently at the Irish Club, later a highly respectable institution, with peers, and even princes, as guests of the evening, but then somewhat of a pot-house in the Charing Cross Road. My memory of these dinners is chiefly of enormous women attired in bright green satin and of wild young men in day clothes who invariably opened their after-dinner speeches with the remark: "I am aware that this Club is strictly non-sectarian and non-political, but—my Father was a member of the Land League (applause), my Grandfather was a Fenian (still louder applause), I myself am a——" (deafening applause which completely drowned the nature of his own political convictions, as well as the protests of the popular secretary, Sam Geddes).

At those entertainments I met various Nationalist members with whom I used to dine in the House of Commons or have tea on the Terrace; while one of our own Kerry members, Tom O'Donnell, undertook to teach me Irish—an effort which did not, I fear, meet with much success, but which led to a lifelong friendship with a man of exceptional character and charm, whose passionate belief in Ireland has survived the winds of time and the storms of disillusionment.

In November 1913 I finally "put the lid" on my social collapse by staying with the Aberdeens at the Viceregal Lodge. Unionist Ireland never recognizing a Liberal Viceroy, the Aberdeens were not only ostracized but were the subject of endless

petty and ridiculous stories which did not contain even the proverbial grain of truth. The Lodge was a delightful house to stay in, and the fact of their not having to entertain hosts of people with whom they could never have had anything in common gave the Aberdeens all the more time to devote to the causes they both had at heart. Meals were erratic. Dinner was seldom before 11 p.m. and often very much later. At the end of a strenuous day devoted to expeditions to distant sanatoria and milk depots, there were generally meetings to be attended in the evenings lasting until one's usual bedtime, but the most thoughtful of A.D.C.s invariably sent, on these occasions, soup and poached eggs to one's bedroom to sustain one between tea and the midnight meal.

Lady Aberdeen herself is capable not only of existing without food but without sleep, being frequently found by a housemaid, at sunrise, seated in her evening dress at her writing-table.

No Vicereine ever worked harder or spent more time and money on the welfare of Ireland, but, because she was a Home Ruler, the Unionist element, instead of lending a helping hand to a crusade they should have long ago started themselves, merely sniffed and repeated idiotic tales of Viceregal economies, which, even if they were true, in no way affected Lady Aberdeen's generosity to the poor. On one occasion when she came to Kerry I took her to one of the most poverty-stricken regions known as "Congested Districts," where human beings, pigs and chickens lived in distressing proximity. In every cottage we entered she left an amazingly generous contribution, for which I subsequently found myself sharing a certain amount of wholly unmerited credit, a mythical personage entitled "Lady Abergordon" existing to this day

in the recollection of the astonished inhabitants of Cromane.

Although it is many years since they left Ireland, the cause for which both Lord and Lady Aberdeen worked so unremittingly still goes on, and the most appropriate monument to their memory is to be found in the decrease of tuberculosis and the amazingly improved health of the country in general.

As a member of the crowd, I watched one day in a Dublin street the arrival of their successors. Lord Wimborne, "a fine figure of a man on horse-back," commanded universal admiration. Lady Wimborne, in a bright green cloak, very well got up, was seated with her children in an open carriage.

"Holy Mary!" said a woman in front of me. "Did ye ever see the like of her!—*poor* Lady Aberdeen at any rate looked respectable."

\* \* \* \* \*

In the spring of 1914 we went to stay with Mr. Avray Tipping in his lovely new house at Chepstow, with marvellous gardens of many delights. Lloyd George and a large party of Welsh members, their wives and families, came over on Sunday to lunch. I sat next him and we talked of Ulster, which of course at that time was the one subject of conversation. His irresponsibility rather horrified me. He enthused over the National Volunteers and said America would supply them with money and arms. I said, "What chance have they in a Civil War? You know what Irish rebellions have always been—they invariably rise on the wrong day, or lose their leader, or else there is a storm—they have no organization."

"Ah," he said, "they never had a chance before, never till now have they had a sympathetic

Government." He was obviously all for civil war.

I suggested one did not want to start Home Rule under such circumstances. "Oh, I don't know," he said, "it's not such a bad way."

He said he told Redmond two years before what he was up against in Ulster, and neither he nor Devlin would believe him ; both insisted that it was all bluff, confirming what Redmond and Devlin had both said to me, proving they did not take Ulster seriously.

I told him "Carsonite" was the most opprobrious epithet you could bestow on your enemy in the South, and he told me of a Frenchman who, soon after the Franco-German War, had a man up for libel.

"What did he say?" asked the judge.

"He called me names."

"Did he call you *cochon*?"

"Much worse—he called me Bismarck!"

We discussed what would happen if Ulster mobilized and he replied: "The Navy would blockade it," adding that the Navy was "all right," which was more than the Army was at that time—although my cousin Hubert Gough, who was responsible for the "Curragh Incident," subsequently told me that his threat to resign rather than take up arms against the North was completely misinterpreted, as it would have applied equally to the South, his objection to shooting his own countrymen not being limited to one particular party.

Although I was enormously interested in meeting Lloyd George, for whom I had, at the time, considerable admiration, I think on the whole, in spite of his undeniable charm, I was somewhat disillusioned, and came to the conclusion that he

was more dangerous than great ; more witty than wise, at any rate on the subject of Ireland.

That the North and the South would have come to blows in 1914 if it had not been for the Great War seems more than likely. They are bound to do it some day, and it is one of those extremely unpleasant happenings which one would rather have behind one than in front. The National Volunteers were certainly out for blood that summer, although *whose* was not at first apparent. Ireland was in an ugly mood and ready, like an angry tigress, to spring on anyone who crossed her path. England, however, persisted in treating her as a cranky cat, which could be propitiated with a saucer of cream. "Pretty Puss," they called, inviting her in coaxing accents to a Conference. John Redmond lapped the cream.

"I hear you have Buckingham Palace in your pocket," George Mair said to him one day during the proceedings.

"Well," replied Mr. Redmond, "I admit I quite enjoy what Disraeli called 'simpering in gilded saloons.'"

Across the water, however, the tigress was snarling. Arms were pouring in openly from some mysterious source. At a meeting of the W.N.H.A.<sup>1</sup> held in the Carnegie Hall in Killorglin, with the Protestant Dean in the chair and the entire county on the Committee, stocks of rifles piled against the walls confronted the astounded members. I am no authority on guns of any kind, but even I thought they looked rather odd and was not surprised to learn later that they were obsolete Enfields, discarded some years (or centuries) ago by the Italian Army, which would certainly have killed anyone attempting to fire them. The Volunteers, how-

<sup>1</sup> Women's National Health Association.



ever, were not to be defeated by such trifles. Having once started drilling, nothing could stop them. They or their descendants (nearly twenty years later) are still at it, without its having had the slightest effect on their bearing or their gait, which remains of a lamentably unsoldierlike description. And as they never actually went into battle, and are never likely to, it is difficult to understand so much enthusiasm for a form of exercise which must work havoc with their boots and has, as a rule, to be practised in secret and leads nowhere.

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## CHAPTER X

### THE WAR—A TRIP TO FRANCE

IN the desperate clash of armies in the fields and marshes of France and Belgium, Ireland's claim for freedom seemed like the flicker of a candle beside a blazing furnace. In the general chaos and confusion which overwhelmed the world, the candle apparently went out. Over 16,000 National Volunteers actually joined the British Army; others, discouraged by the treatment meted out to Ireland by the War Office, broke with Redmond. The majority faded away for a time, eventually finding an outlet for their military aspirations in the 1916 Easter Week rebellion. Meanwhile, outwardly at any rate, Ireland's sympathy was with England in the war.

I wanted to go to London, where I thought I might get work in a hospital or canteen, but I had to stay and supervise operations at Ard-na-sidhe, now nearing completion. It had taken just over a year to build, and if, like all ideals, the reality fell somewhat short of the perfection imagined, few things in life have ever given me quite the same pleasure as the building of the House of my Dreams.

Long and low and gabled, with leaded casement windows set in grey stone mullions, unlike most newly built houses it never *looked* new. Perhaps it was the warm brown sandstone, perhaps it was the lovely greeny-grey Westmorland slates, or it may have been the Kerry climate which gave it,

from the start, the appearance of having weathered the rain and the winds of centuries. Seen from the Lake against the background of green wood and brown mountain, it gave the impression—probably from its proximity to the “fairy fort”—of having materialized in a moment of enchantment rather than of having been fashioned by human hands of earthly stone and mortar. Belonging to no particular age or style, it fitted harmoniously into the landscape instead of hitting it in the eye like the deplorable newly erected “residences” disfiguring the northern shores of the Lake, mercifully hidden from view by a thick belt of fir-trees. Architecturally the entrance side was a more successful feature of the house than the front, which wandered a little too inconsequently and grew somewhat confused at the loggia end, where a steeply pitched roof between the dining-room and the servants’ wing slightly spoiled the symmetrical effect of the whole.

A rounded cut stone arch over the heavy oak entrance door was perhaps the most original feature, and the one which aroused most criticism. “A Romanesque door in an Elizabethan house !” exclaimed, one day, a horrified visitor who rather fancied himself as an expert in architecture. I explained that the house was not Elizabethan but Irish and that, as there was no traditional domestic architecture in Ireland, Mr. Morley Horder had gone for inspiration to the ruined churches which are the only survivals in Kerry of an ancient Gaelic civilization. The contractor, who had been listening with interest to the discussion on the “Romanesque” style of the door, absorbed enough of the conversation to reply authoritatively to subsequent inquiries on the part of later visitors that the house was built in the *Ruinesque* style—a

description which at any rate described the condition of its owners when completed.

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Returning to London in the late autumn I attended Red Cross lectures and, taking out a V.A.D. certificate, searched vainly for a job. Just as I was giving up hope, Lord Dunraven, with whom I was playing bridge one day at his house in Connaught Place, said if I liked to go to France he would take me in his yacht to Boulogne, where he was going to fetch wounded officers and where he was sure Lady Dudley, who was a friend of his, would take me on in her hospital. It was just after the first battle of Ypres and London was full of stories of the terrible conditions at Boulogne, where the wounded were said to be lying out in the streets, with the Red Cross entirely unable to cope with the trainloads of casualties arriving from the front.

It seemed a marvellous opportunity for me to get work, and I jumped at it. I had only a few hours in which to obtain a permit from the War Office to go on the yacht (which, however, proved unnecessary) and a passport, which I succeeded in achieving in front of a queue of applicants about a mile long ; and, hurling myself into a taxi, got to Waterloo only just in time to join Lord Dunraven and the two Blennerhassetts, mother and daughter, who were travelling as the hospital staff on the yacht.

It was a cold, grey November day, and a stiff gale blowing, and when I saw the *Grianaig* in Southampton dock I very nearly took the next train back to London. For a yacht, she was, as a matter of fact, fairly spacious, being 500 ton, but to my panic-stricken eye she seemed more like 50. Never had I put to sea in anything so inadequate, and long before we were out of Southampton Water I had retired to my cabin, where I spent a hideous night,

praying for the torpedo which we were told would probably be our fate and which I hoped would blow me into another and less agonizing world.

It was snowing when, after sixteen hours at sea—several of which had been spent anchored, in a blizzard, outside—we were finally grudgingly allowed into Boulogne harbour, where the *Grianaig* appeared to arouse as much hostility as if she had been a German submarine. Whether it was Lord Dunraven's appearance in the uniform of a lieutenant in the R.N.R., to which, with Irish originality, he had added long Wellington top-boots, or whether it was his feminine followers in the shape of the Blennerhassetts and myself who excited their suspicions, I don't know ; but we were followed by French detectives who never let us out of their sight during our tour of the town while awaiting the arrival of the wounded officers deputed to the *Grianaig*.

At Lady Dudley's hospital we found her down with pneumonia and were told there were no vacancies on the staff of her hospital or of any other. I need hardly say that the stories we had heard in London of the streets of Boulogne being a shambles of dead and dying were without any foundation whatsoever. The Red Cross organization was working without a hitch. The whole of one of the long piers had been covered in and was being used as a makeshift hospital for urgent cases. Lady Algy Gordon Lennox, who was in charge of it, came to lunch on board and afterwards took us over it. Unfortunately she had no vacancy, and Sir Alfred Keogh, head of the R.A.M.C., who was also at lunch, could suggest no opening for me, except at Lady Angela Forbes's canteen, admittance to which could only be obtained, we were told, on payment !

Feeling even more utterly superfluous in France

than I was in England, there was nothing left for me to do but to return to London, which I intended doing by the next available Channel boat ; this, however, Lord Dunraven would not hear of, insisting that there was plenty of room on the *Grianaig*, even with the twelve officers who by that time were collected in the saloon. I protested for all I was worth that I would only be in the way, but when I tried to remove my belongings I found myself told off to play bridge with three of the officers, who, straight from the trenches, had chosen this particular form of amusement to beguile themselves with on their homeward voyage. They were, of course, none of them stretcher cases like those we had seen lying on the deck of the Loefflers' yacht moored beside us on Boulogne pier, the sight of whom haunted me for weeks and months. They could all walk and they could all talk, but only one of them seemed to have any desire to and he could not stop. They were still in their muddy trench-boots and they were perished with cold and had been through horrors and privations one could only guess at—but they wanted to play bridge.

The *Grianaig*, having raised her anchor, put out to sea, rising, with sickening regularity, up on end, and falling into what seemed to be a bottomless trough. The King of Diamonds hit me in the eye, the Queen of Spades disappeared into the depths of the ocean—I held on to the table—when even that slipped from my grasp, I fled . . . only just in time. All night—when not otherwise occupied—as I lay in the cabin to which I felt I had no right, I cursed myself and Fate for my ignominious collapse and my failure to carry on with the only job the war had so far provided me with—the amusing of three weary, nerve-wracked men.

\* \* \* \* \*

By Christmas nearly every soldier one had ever known had been killed. One friend (Major) Julian Ryan, who had taken command of the Munsters after the disastrous Battle of Festubert, still remained—though only for a while—and when he wrote and asked me to provide the Battalion with green flags I rushed wildly round London searching for someone who could design and embroider them with a Bengal tiger (the Munster badge). Eventually I found in Sloane Square a School of Needlework who undertook the work, and early in the New Year I got the eight flags (two for each company) off to France. The Munsters were enchanted with them and I got several letters of ecstatic thanks. They carried the flags into the Battle of the Rue du Bois and they figure prominently in the wonderful picture by F. Matania of the "Last General Absolution of the Munsters," a copy of which hangs in my bedroom to-day, inscribed with the appropriate words of Swinburne :

That their dust may re-build her a Nation  
That their souls may re-light her a Star.

Major Willie Redmond, who came one day later in the year to Lady MacDonnell's parcel-packing depot, for Irish prisoners, in Kensington Palace, where I was working, wanted similar flags made for his own Battalion of the Dublins. We were arranging to have them done when the War Office, hearing with displeasure of the waving of green flags on the Western Front, with the narrow-minded hostility which distinguished it at the time in all its dealings with Ireland, forbade the making or the using of them.

I shall always be glad that the Munsters at any rate had mine, even though they were, alas, not used, as anticipated, in the Allied decorations of Berlin.

## PART II

There's sorrow on the wind, my grief,  
There's sorrow on the wind.

*Gaelic Song.*





## CHAPTER XI

### EASTER WEEK—MY GARDEN—VISITORS—A SCHOOL TREAT

IN 1916 I went to live in Ireland for good. When I told my solicitor, Sir George Lewis, of my intention he looked horror-struck.

"You can't *live* in Ireland!" he exclaimed. "You can *go* there, but nobody could *live* there."

And when I persisted I not only could but would, "Whatever will you do there?" he inquired incredulously.

"I will grow things," I replied vaguely.

"Potatoes and moss," he suggested sarcastically.

Looking out over the dingy roofs and sooty chimney-pots from his grimy window I smiled as I closed the door on his sordid office and an equally sordid chapter in my own life.

Within a week of my return to Caragh came the news of the Easter Week rebellion in Dublin and the reports of a coming German invasion of Ireland. We had no papers and little authentic news; only the wildest rumours spreading like flames in a forest fire, out of which one fact definitely emerged: the landing at Banna Strand, in Kerry, of Sir Roger Casement, in a collapsible boat, with three revolvers, a green flag and half a sausage—a somewhat inadequate equipment for the emancipation of Ireland, on which he is supposed to have been intent.

In the absence of more detailed information I felt some difficulty in taking the situation seriously.

It is related of Queen Victoria that a certain distinguished German once presumed to discuss with her the possibility of an enemy invasion on the East Coast of England. Having demonstrated how easily the landing of a large force could be carried out without the knowledge of the British Navy, the triumphant German went on to describe the army of his country marching on London.

"What would happen then?" he inquired.

"They would be arrested by the police," calmly replied the unruffled Queen: a prophecy which seems on the present occasion to have been strangely fulfilled, two policemen having apparently saved the situation, in which something undoubtedly went wrong—a not uncommon occurrence in Ireland, where, in the matter of "risings" the national lack of organization is not infrequently at fault.

On this occasion, a peasant wandering at dawn on the beach found, tossing in the surf, an empty boat of an unusual design. Suspecting something strange, he reported the matter at the nearest police station to the Sergeant in charge, who, with a constable, hastened to the scene. Close by the boat the sand was seen to be disturbed; buried underneath it they found the revolvers and the flag—a couple of miles away, hidden in an old fort, a mysterious stranger whom they promptly arrested and conveyed to the barracks, where, from a list of photographs of "wanted" criminals, he was immediately identified as Sir Roger Casement.

Meanwhile a suspicious-looking ship flying the Dutch flag had been sighted close by, in Tralee Bay, by a British patrol, who ordered her to proceed to Queenstown to be searched. Off the Fastnet Rock she suddenly hung out the German flag and

sank, the crew putting off in boats, and subsequently admitting that, concealed in the cargo, were quantities of rifles and ammunition.

The same night—Good Friday—a motor-car with four mysterious strangers, who had inquired the way to Valentia Island, ran, in the dark, into the river at Killorglin. Three were drowned; the fourth escaped, no one knew how or where. The car was found to have been stolen from a garage in Limerick. The bodies of the strangers were never claimed, and were buried without identification. In some way they were connected with the rising and, from papers found on their bodies, dragged from the bottom of the river, to their accidental death is partly attributed the fiasco of the landing, which seems to have been intended to take place simultaneously with the rebellion in Dublin. For its failure, Providence and the police seem mainly responsible.

A certain nervousness subsequently prevailed in the neighbourhood of these disturbing happenings. A local rising was said to be imminent. Two elderly ladies living near me called on the local carpenter, who was also the leading Sinn Feiner of the district.

“Are our lives in danger, Patsy?” one of them inquired apprehensively.

“Not at all, Miss Mary,” was the gallant reply, “we shan’t be shooting any ladies *this turn*.”

Totally unexpected as the rising was, it seemed at first to stun Ireland. People in general were horror-struck and I do not think that even among Sinn Feiners there was any real sympathy with the rebels until Sir John Maxwell’s executions turned the tide in their favour. With its holocaust of martyrs the cause gained in popularity. By the time the last batch had paid the death penalty, the

halo which they sought had invested their memories for all time with imperishable glory. With no earthly chance, or even hope, of success, deliberately they went out to die ; their only object " the saving of Ireland's soul."

How well they knew their country they proved by their sacrifice. In England there is a proverb to the effect that " a living dog is better than a dead lion." In Ireland, where only the dead may be said to be really alive, the opposite obtains. Living, Pearse, the gentle, dreaming visionary, teaching and writing of national ideals, Connolly, thundering and declaiming the rights and the wrongs of Labour, Plunkett and MacDonagh, singing dirges of Ireland's mournful past, might have caused temporary inconvenience to the police : dead, the memory of their martyrdom embitters to this day the relations between England and Ireland, inflaming, for generations to come, the political passions of Ireland.

As W. B. Yeats prophetically writes in " Countess Cathleen " :

They shall be remembered for ever ;  
They shall be living for ever ;  
They shall be speaking for ever ;  
They have no need for prayers, they have  
no need for prayers.

It is, of course, difficult to see what other course England could have adopted, plunged as she was, at the moment, in her death struggle with Germany. Ireland had stabbed her in the back. Magnanimity was not in the air. The " shootings " in Dublin were ruthlessly carried out : the seven signatories to the Republican manifesto and five others were executed at dawn . . . a silence seemed to fall on Ireland, but if one held one's breath and listened

one could hear somewhere far away the faint rumbling of the gathering storm.

\* \* \* \* \*

Like everything else in Ireland, my garden wore, that summer, an unsettled look. The political tension seemed to have obtruded itself into the herbaceous border, where the bare stems of the slug-eaten phloxes wore an air of warning of greater shocks to come. One of my most fiercely Unionist neighbours refrained from sowing sweet-pea that year—her protest, she explained, against the policy of the Government, every member of whom she said she would like to see “hanging from a lamp-post.”

My own sweet-pea showed, alas ! little inclination to justify the optimism with which it had been sown in the spring ; the gaping voids in the hedge it should by now have grown into being explained by Dan, the gardener, as due to “damping off,” the invariable sequel to any enterprise in early sowing in these parts.

A Kerry garden has much to contend with in the matter of climate. No sooner has it recovered from the gales of March than it is parched with the April drought, “burnt” in the searching blast of May, known as the “Scariveen,” which, blowing from the North (a devastating quarter, especially in Ireland), brings destruction to the tender growth of bud and blossom. For a brief space in June I really did experience the feeling of elation which comes from fulfilled ambition, only to have my fleeting satisfaction washed away in the torrential downpour, lasting from St. Swithin’s Day till the equinoctial gales finally lay flat my dreams and tore my hopes up by the roots.

But though exasperated by the climate I per-

sisted in my efforts. Fortunately there is no finality in gardening. Mistakes can be rectified. A colour scheme which fails one year can be replaced the following one. Plants which do not thrive in one situation can be moved to other more congenial ones. Flowers, like people, must often dislike their immediate neighbours quite as much as the soil or the aspect in which they grow. Mine lived for years in a state of perpetual motion, which had the effect of killing off all but the really adaptable, which flourished amazingly when finally established where they could enjoy life.

Being one of those unfortunate people born with an artist's eye but not, alas ! with the hand of one, the pictures I could not paint on canvas took shape and colour in the herbaceous borders, by the stream and in the rock garden lying in the sloping dell between the house and the lake, the making and planning of which apparently led to local expressions of doubt as to my sanity.

"Sure them stones won't grow," said Dan, when I had endeavoured some years before to explain to him the nature of a garden which, in its earlier stages, bore undoubted resemblance to a cemetery the day after the Resurrection.

"Dan, do you think I'm mad?" I inquired.

"Begorra, ma'am, I couldn't say," he replied with the typical evasiveness of the Kerry peasant.

Exhausted by my gardening efforts I used to lie, in the evenings, in the loggia, in the summer sun, rejoicing—so far as one could rejoice with the sound of distant battle always in one's ears—in hours of golden idleness, watching the shadows lengthening on the mountains, the waters of the lake reflecting the changing humours of the sky.

Whether such abandonment in the midst of the world's upheaval was justified or not was a matter

of opinion. All that mattered was that my own conscience was clear. As we say in Kerry, while in London "I did my endeavours," battering for weeks at the portals of the Red Cross and the Y.M.C.A., interviewing secretaries and appearing before Boards of relentless women who treated the offer of my services much as if I were a criminal appealing in a police court for mercy ; unbending sometimes to the extent of placing my name at the end of a waiting list already comprising thousands of applicants, but never, in any circumstances, giving me any encouragement to believe that, even in the event of the war lasting till the end of time, my services would be required.

From each of these interviews I returned more crushed than from the last, feeling there must be something inherently wrong with me. It could not be, I decided, that I was not sufficiently intelligent ; for, looking around the most coveted positions at home and abroad, it was only too obvious that they had not been achieved by conspicuous intellectual merit. It could not be owing to any defect of moral worth, because with each application I had forwarded testimonials which would have been flattering as obituary notices. More likely, I decided, the opposite was the cause : I was not sufficiently notorious. Uncertain whether to feel flattered or humiliated by this solution of my failure to obtain a permanent job, I applied myself to such desultory occupations as came to hand : making bandages, packing parcels for prisoners, waiting at a canteen, attending some of the innumerable Committee meetings which now took the place of " teas " in London, moving on, with the rest of the members, before one was over, to the next ; aching in every limb, but never for a moment feeling that I was in any way contributing anything



of the slightest importance to the winning of the war.

\* \* \* \* \*

On an old sundial in the garden of a Tudor house I once read this inscription, "Thinke and Thanke."

From my chair on the loggia, looking across the paved garden, beyond the island, to where the lake reflected in its still and glassy depths the birch-clad slopes of the mountain, I often thought that summer not only of the war, but of former Junes spent in the feverish fatuity of London seasons, and "thanked" that I was there no more.

For that June in Kerry was a revelation of golden sunshine, of shimmering radiance, of riotous colour. On the walls of the house *Solanum crispum*, a mass of mauve-blue flower, climbed to the roof; the brilliant pink rose, Mrs. W. J. Grant, framed the casement windows; the *Climanthus* was smothered in bunches of scarlet bloom. Between the brownish-yellow flagstones at my feet were cushions of blue *Veronica*, tufts of mauve *Erinus*; while in and out of the *antirrhinum* beds a little yellow wagtail—surely a faery bird—hopped on her dainty feet, snatching at colossal worms for the sustenance of her family squawking in their nest above the loggia pier. At the top of the rock garden, *Prunus pissardii* rose in purple glory above the clump of broom and golden gorse. Bluebells under the silver birches reflected the azure of the sky above. Down by the stream a bank of *Azalea mollis* dazzled with its orange-salmon brilliance. *Arum* lilies rose with stately grace above the water's edge.

Away in the woods the wild crab-apple clothed in clouds of blossom the slopes above the silvery lake, on the farther shores of which the mountains,



PAVED GARDEN AT ARD-NA-SIDHE



misty blue, with purple shadows clinging to their sides, stretched away into the mysterious distance of Dingle Bay.

For a good deal of time I was alone, but never lonely in the devastating sense of the feeling which possessed me in a London crowd. Like Christy Mahon in *The Playboy of the Western World*, "If it's a poor thing to be lonesome it's worse, maybe, to be mixing with the fools of earth," and, thank God, I am not so poor a creature that I cannot live alone. After seventeen years of London I agree with Thoreau that "Society is commonly too cheap. We meet at very short intervals, not having had time to acquire any new value for each other. We meet at meals three times a day, and give each other a taste of that old musty cheese that we are. We have had to agree on a certain set of rules called etiquette and politeness to make this frequent meeting durable and that we need not come to open war . . . we live thick and are in each other's way, and stumble over one another, and I think that we thus lose some respect for one another . . ." Like him I could say with honesty that "I am no more lonely than a single mullein or dandelion in a pasture, or a bean leaf or sorrel, or a horse-fly, or a bumble bee. I am no more lonely than the Mill Brook, or a weather cock, or the North Star, or the South wind, or an April shower, or a January thaw, or the first spider in a new house."

But it was not easy to make people understand this. Agitated relations wrote beseeching me to invite "So-and-so" to keep me company: "you must be so bored all by yourself"; little realizing that with the advent of the "So-and-so" suggested, complete isolation would immediately set in.

Even the country people, the women I met on

the road, the men carting turf from the bog, kept insisting that I must find it "awful quiet above"—"above" being the local designation for the house I inhabit, other localities coming under the heading of "back" or "away back" for still remoter regions. Yet could they but realize it, it was the very quiet "above" which attracted me after the restless rush of London, where people are so busy trying to be clever and trying to get rich that they have little time to breathe, and none at all to think.

In the country of the mind the only society that matters is of the soul. Neighbours, if they are not neighbours in spirit, if they cannot speak one's language or think one's thoughts, might just as well not be there at all. As it is, even the stars seemed nearer to one at times than many of the people I have found myself thrown amongst in London, while the remoteness from which I viewed the world that summer was nothing to the remoteness in which I had often moved in it.

The few visitors I had were all friends, which is not always the case with visitors; the people who want to come and stay with one seldom being those one would think of inviting; like the men who want to marry one, who are rarely the men one would think of proposing to oneself, supposing it were the custom for a woman to do so.

Of all self-invited guests, the woman who lived in pre-war days, from August to November in her boxes, was the most dreaded. Every owner of a country house has had devastating experience of her. Once upon a time something even worse befell me, in the shape of a guest unknown to me personally but dumped on me by mutual friends. She was English, they explained, and anxious to "see" Ireland. They felt that unless she saw

Kerry she would have no conception of the real Ireland.

Afterwards I realized the serpent-like quality of their friendship, and knew that, in asking me to invite her to my house, they had only one object, which was to get her out of their own.

She arrived: and already as I greeted her on the doorstep I found myself inquiring of Heaven what in the world I had done to what she called "our mutual friends," that they should suddenly have become enemies for life. I gave her tea. She gave me the history of her life, disclosing, to my horror, as strangers sometimes will, in unsought confidences, the secret emptiness of a singularly arid mind. We adjourned to the terrace. She looked at the lake, bathed in the rosy glow of the setting sun; at the purple-stemmed fir-trees rising from the water's edge; across to the farthest shore, where drifts of wraith-like cloud lay on the slopes of See Fin; round by the rocky heights above the birch-clad hollow of Oolagh, to the bay, lying dark and green, beneath the shadow of the island.

"Exactly like Scotland," she announced.

I expected that. It is an unfailing remark with visitors of a certain type.

Of course it was not always Scotland my peerless view resembled. Sometimes it was Italy, sometimes Switzerland or Norway. I have even known it compared to the Seychelles Islands; by a sailor, to Scapa Flow; and once a small boy, aged seven, accompanying his mother, exclaimed, "Oh, Mummy, isn't it just like the Serpentine?"

On this occasion my visitor proceeded:

"I'm not very fond of mountains, they make me feel so sad—and water is very depressing, isn't it?"

I did not agree.

"It must be awful here in winter," she continued cheerfully.

In a voice reminiscent of the severest frost that ever nipped the buds of spring, I replied that even in summer there were occasions when it could be awful; and led her to her room.

For two days—and rainy ones at that—and two interminable evenings, spent over the fire listening to her ceaseless vapourings, mostly of love—her experiences of which had been, I need hardly say, of the most blameless description—waiting for the clock to strike some hour at which I could with decency bid her good night, I endured her; and then, finding that her intention was to stay with me indefinitely, with the shameless disregard for truth for which my race is famed, I told her she looked ill.

There was nothing on earth the matter with her, but the suggestion of ill-health is one which few women ever resist. She consented to 'spend' the following morning in bed. She appeared at lunch, but, persuading her that she was worse, I induced her to return to her room till dinner. The next day, I anticipated her descent to the drawing-room for tea by sending it to her room an hour earlier than usual, and threatened to wire for the doctor if she attempted to get up for dinner. By the end of the week I had seen her off to the station, pale and wan, booked to London to consult a specialist, convinced that her days on earth were numbered.

Immoral, perhaps, but it was my only chance. One or other of us had to collapse, and she, being the hardier of the two, would recover the sooner.

Since then, the years have brought discrimination. And the war which swept away so many of

our friends and our visitors also simplified our entertaining.

Personally I have a horror of parties, and as I always endeavour to avoid as much as possible all enterprises which entail the wearing of a fixed and vacuous smile for an indefinite number of hours, I seldom give anything which could be dignified by the name of one. Individually I am always delighted to see my friends ; collectively they have the effect of completely unnerving me. On the rare occasions when I have been misguided enough to invite a large and indiscriminate crowd to my house I have seldom felt that the experiment was entirely successful. At any rate, whatever the feelings of my guests may have been, I have rarely, under the circumstances, enjoyed myself.

The school feast over which I presided at Caragh was, however, a pleasant contrast to the restrained gloom of some of my former London entertainments. For one thing, the juvenile population of Kerry is neither *blasé* nor dyspeptic, like most of my society acquaintances, and as they had never had a treat of the kind before this particular one it certainly did not suffer from the blighting effects of comparison, the most fatal of all deterrents to hospitality.

Dan, to whom I first confided my project of a school feast, considered that "it could be very nice." It is significant of the inhabitants of the South of Ireland that the present tense of the verb is non-existent, conversation being entirely carried on by means of the future and conditional mood. Dan, I may mention incidentally, was not only a gardener but a diplomatist. He always agreed with me, and nothing ever put him out. No matter how many times he found himself requested to dig up and replant the same border or the same bed, he



was equally full of admiration for the new arrangement as he was for the old, "it could be very nice here and it could be very nice the way we had it," being his unfailing and tactful remark.

To return, however, to the school treat. It appeared that once upon a time a former employer of Dan's had also provided an entertainment which had, on that occasion, taken the form of a Christmas tree. It was Dan himself "that had dressed it" and I was given to understand that he would be pleased to undertake the responsibility again in the event of my deciding upon the same form of hospitality. In spite of the fact that we were in Ireland, where times and seasons proverbially wait upon man instead of man being a slave to them, the idea of a Christmas tree in September somehow did not altogether appeal to me. I suggested instead tea on the lawn, followed by games and "sports." "Well, that could be very nice, too," said Dan.

My next move took the form of calling on the schoolmistress. As it was holiday time, instead of going to the school, I went to her house. A little girl opened the door.

"Is Mrs. Maguire in?" I inquired.

"She do be gone out," was the reply.

"Will she be in soon?" I asked.

"I couldn't say."

"Has she been gone long?" I next asked, thinking I might possibly overtake her on the road.

"Not so very long thin."

"Which way did she go?" I finally inquired of this decidedly baffling handmaiden.

"She's to the Isle of Man," was the illuminating reply.

Under the circumstances there was nothing to

be done but to go home and await the return of Mrs. Maguire from her travels.

About a fortnight later, the school term being in full swing, I walked, not without a certain amount of trepidation, up the gravel path which leads to the National School, an edifice of the usual uncompromising hideousness, situated on the edge of a bog and in the midst of some of the most lovely scenery in Ireland. Mrs. Maguire received me sympathetically. Seventy little girls in pinafores, with bare feet, fixed me with an expression of disconcerting interest and surprise. Having explained my mission, after a consultation with the headmaster, my invitation for the following Saturday was accepted with so much enthusiasm that I felt sufficiently emboldened by the success of my visit to ask that I might hear the children at their lessons.

“Oh, the poor little things,” said Mrs. Maguire in a deprecating voice, “they are not like the children in England; they have not the same education at all.” In making this remark, Mrs. Maguire did so, no doubt, out of deference to what she presumed would be my point of view. As a matter of fact, it immediately aroused my indignation. A persistent attempt to regard me as English, just because it happened to have been my misfortune to spend several wholly unprofitable years in England, is distressing enough to anybody born, like myself, in Kerry: to hear the children of Ireland depreciated for my benefit was more than I could bear.

“You are entirely mistaken, Mrs. Maguire,” I replied with great dignity. “Irish children are quite as well educated as English ones. They are not only more intelligent but better conducted and better mannered. English children cannot in any

way be compared to Irish children. In education as well as in everything else Irish children are far ahead of the English." I grew quite heated and said a great deal more on the subject, which, in the interest of Truth, I had perhaps better not repeat.

"Well now, to be sure!" exclaimed Mrs. Maguire, when I had finished.

After this outburst of patriotism on my part, I naturally refused to take any interest in anything but the Irish class. All the same, after several fruitless attempts to grapple with a sentence chalked up for my benefit on the blackboard, I wisely withdrew before displaying my total inability to cope with a language whose national characteristics are easily recognized in the complete independence existing between the spelling and the pronunciation.

Punctually, on the appointed day, the children marched in procession up the avenue to the house, each child carrying a mug, which, after they had seated themselves on the grass, was filled with tea, while large slabs of bread and jam and cake were handed round on trays. The solemnity of this part of the proceedings was, as is generally the case at children's parties, somewhat overpowering. And yet it has always seemed to me that children on these occasions display very much more wisdom than their elders. Nobody who has something really good to eat ever wants to talk. Only a child, however, has the moral courage to remain deaf and dumb to everything that is not immediately concerned with the next helping.

Once the games and the sports began, the proceedings grew hilarious. The three-legged races, in which the first starters were Dan's father, aged eighty, and my new housemaid, immediately placed

matters on an uproarious footing. The sack races, in which the competing boys fell in heaps on top of each other ; the hill-climbing competition in which an infant of three arrived in the first heat at the top of a precipitous mound ; the tug-of-war, the various races and games, all met with wild success.

Only one little girl sat apart from the rest, big tears rolling from her enormous blue eyes. “Please, ma’am, I’m sick,” was her reply to my solicitous inquiries ; followed by “Please, ma’am, I had too much sweet cake,” by way of explanation for the misfortune which had overtaken her.

Later, the children assembled on the terrace in front of the house and the schoolmaster proceeded to make a speech. Beginning with a flowery reference to “the lake of crystal like a sea of glass spread at our feet,” he went on to show that, though much of the beauty of the scene was undoubtedly due to the Almighty, there was no denying the fact that the original conception had been largely improved upon by me. Flattered as I naturally felt at this coupling of my name with that of the Creator, I was distinctly relieved when a breeze got up and extinguished the light by which he had gone on to read a grossly exaggerated account of my talents and virtues.

“The candle has *quinched* on me,” he remarked plaintively. Instead of providing him with another, I suggested the children should sing. The sound of their clear young voices in that most haunting of melodies, “Let Erin remember the days of old,” their happy faces outlined against the background of mountains and lake bathed in the golden light of the setting sun, made an unforgettable impression.

Personally, I had only one regret in wishing them good-bye, and that was that I could not have a school treat every day.

## CHAPTER XII

MRS. DALY DISCOURSES—PUCK FAIR—KERRY WEDDINGS

“THE Allies is bet,” said Mrs. Daly, who was picking gooseberries in the garden for the market.

“Oh,” I remarked.

“It do be common talk,” continued Mrs. Daly, slightly nettled at the implication of incredulity expressed in my voice, “and the Kayser he’s after saying how he’ll take Ireland to give to his daughter for a kitchen garden when he’d be dying, and how he’d be having his dinner at Killarney at Lord Kenmare’s mansion, no less.”

“Where did you hear that?” I inquired.

“I read it on the paper.”

“What paper?”

“I forget what it was called then, but I read it all right.”

“How will Ireland like being under the Germans?” I inquired.

“The Germans is a great people,” replied Mrs. Daly evasively. “Himself worked for them in America, a decent, quiet people, he said, paying the wages very reg’lar.”

“Don’t the English pay regularly too?”

“Indeed and they do, but they have a right to give Ireland her freedom.”

Mrs. Daly passed, with a snort, under a gooseberry bush out of my sight. I observed with regret that she did not pick systematically, but flitted with

the inconsequence of her race from bush to bush, helping herself to the largest and choicest berries from each.

"Do you remember Katie?" she inquired, rising up, after an interval, out of a thicket of "Yellow Ambers," disentangling the thorny spikes out of her already considerably tattered garments.

To my disappointment I found the conversation, possibly out of deference to my prejudice, had been changed.

"Katie?" I repeated vaguely.

"Me husband's brother's niece—her with the wooden leg. She's after getting married to a soldier."

"Goodness!" I exclaimed, visions of Katie, and what she used to describe as her "blasted leg," recalling themselves painfully to my memory. "Katie married? Why, it must be fifteen years since we got her into the hospital."

"Well, they got her out of it last Tuesday week," said Mrs. Daly, "to get her married."

I gasped. Katie, who, fifteen years ago, was middle-aged and suffering from an incurable complaint, as a bride, staggered me into speechlessness.

"Them separation allowances is grand," continued Mrs. Daly. "The boy she married went off to France the very next day as ever was, and eighteen and six a week Katie do be getting all the time he's away. It'd be a pity if the war were to end now she's out of the hospital and settled so comfortable."

One had of course often heard of these marriages, arranged at the end of a soldier's leave, when, primed with drink, he would fall into the toils of a designing family, awakening to find himself married to some perfectly impossible creature. But Katie of the "blasted leg" . . .

I gasped continuously.

"Them gooseberries is grand," said Mrs. Daly after a pause. "I'll get great profit out of them. Throwing dice for them, the children do be in the town; and all the other hawkers wanting to know where I got them! 'In the garden,' says I; and why should I be letting them know 'twas you that gave them to me? 'In what garden?' sez they. 'In the garden where they grew,' sez I. 'Mary Daly,' says they, 'aren't you the divil painted?'"

In spite of Mrs. Daly the Allies held on. Her views, however, on the subject of the war were those universally held by her class.

Disraeli is reported to have said that whenever he wanted to know what the middle classes of England were thinking, he asked Queen Victoria her opinion. On the same principle, when I wanted to probe into the inmost thoughts of Ireland, I used to "draw" Mrs. Daly; luring her down from her mountain fastness with promises of discarded garments, or branches for firing, or, as on this occasion, the offer of gooseberries. A German victory, I gathered from her garrulous conversation, would be popular owing to the widely held belief that "Germany would give Ireland her freedom." Quite useless were my protestations that it was the last thing she would be likely to bestow on Ireland. Underground propaganda was undoubtedly at work. The war was popular not only with the "Katies" and the "Bridgets" living in unwonted luxury on separation allowances, but with the farming class, to whom rising prices of horses and cattle were bringing a hitherto unknown prosperity.

At "Puck Fair" prices were soaring. This remarkable festival, held in Killorglin on August

11 and lasting for three days—known respectively as “ Gathering Day,” “ Fair Day,” and “ Scattering Day”—is an event of such importance in Kerry that everything local dates from it; all happenings of interest being recorded in popular memory as having occurred “ a week before Puck ” or “ a month after,” as the case may be.

On top of the steep hill forming the main street of the town, enthroned on a high and decorated scaffolding, the “ Puck ” (which is the Irish for goat), his horns tied up with green ribbons, presides over the gathering, the distinguishing feature of which is a wild confusion of stampeding cattle, terrified sheep, plunging horses, backing carts, blind beggars, fighting tinkers, fortune-tellers with roulette boards, old women with barrows selling dried fish, unripe apples stolen from the neighbouring orchards, gingerbread and bull’s-eyes.

The origin of the goat as the presiding deity of the fair seems to have been lost in the mists of time. Some maintain that it dates from Cromwellian days, when a flock of goats rushing from the mountains into the town warned the inhabitants of the approaching soldiers and so saved the lives of the inhabitants. Others believe it to be of even older origin. A more possible theory is that in the year of the great famine, when all the cattle in the country had died of starvation, a solitary goat being the only animal offered for sale, it was put on a pedestal and decorated with ribbons.

My first visit to Puck Fair, I am told, was at the age of eleven days, when I was carried there in the arms of the monthly nurse from Cork, whose unauthorized disappearance with the baby created a panic in the house. On our return in the evening I believe we were both disinfected before being allowed into the presence of my horrified mother.



On the occasion of my last visit, nearly half a century later, I could not help feeling a similar process of purification might not come amiss.

Out of the seething crowd of farmers and dealers discussing cattle and prices on the Fair green, a large red-haired, red-faced jobber from Limerick, contemptuously eyeing a drove of Kerry bullocks, bargaining in accustomed style with a local farmer, obtruded himself between me and the pavement.

"A hundred quid, Mr. Doyle," he suggested with a spit and an air of having, if anything, exceeded the limits of speculative generosity.

"A hundred and fifty," spiritedly replied the owner of the bullocks.

"Come now, be raysonable; everything is on the down line."

"The down line, is it? I tell you, Mr. Quin, prices is killing me. Four pounds, an acre I'm after offering for the grazing of a hundred acres, four hundred pounds a year, and I didn't get it at that."

"And you never expected you would," replied Mr. Quin. "One hundred quid I'm offering you for them bullocks."

"Ye'd ruin me."

"I'm ruined meself," replied Mr. Quin, ostentatiously producing a large roll of notes, which he proceeded to count between a well-moistened finger and thumb.

"Come now, you'll get no better offer. There's no buyers at the fair at all," he remarked untruthfully, replacing the notes in an inner pocket.

Mr. Doyle, with an assumption of utter indifference, surveyed the leaden skies.

"Is that young fellow your son?" he inquired absentmindedly, after a pause, indicating a small boy standing beside Mr. Quin, sucking bull's-eyes.

"He is. I'm learning him jobbing."

"Ye'll be learning him to tell a lot of lies, I'm thinking."

"I'm not learning him lies at all, Mr. Doyle."

"He'll have a damn bad chance as a jobber so," remarked Mr. Doyle, preparing to move on.

"And the hundred quid I'm after offering you?" inquired Mr. Quin, anxiously watching Mr. Doyle's preparations for departure.

"Ah, don't be talking," said Mr. Doyle.

"Well, will we make it a draw?"

"Don't be delusionizing yourself, Mr. Quin, it will be no draw," firmly replied Mr. Doyle, pushing his way through the crowd in search of a buyer less "stiff" than Mr. Quin.

As usually happens on fair days in Ireland, it was raining—a fact which seemed to deter nobody from greeting their friends with the remark, "Fine day," to which all and sundry, with equally unwarrantable optimism, replied, "It is indeed, thank God."

Up and down the town all day, in the mist and the mud, the buying and bargaining, with intervals for refreshment, continued. In the afternoon, the crowd, reinforced by girls in hats of dazzling smartness, surged beneath the "Puck," round which, in booths, an enormous trade was being done; each garment displayed being accompanied by facetious remarks from the auctioneer and witty sallies from the onlookers. Every now and again a drove of sheep or a stampeding cow would charge wildly into their midst, scattering women and children; while the news that "Maggie McKenna's father-in-law had sold his little 'harse' to a dealer from Cork" sent a whole cavalcade off with a rush to the green to assist in the completion of the bargain.

Like so many other festivities in the world, "Puck," owing to the war, was said to be no longer what it used to be. To me personally it seemed neither more nor less melancholy than on any previous occasion. What changes were to be noted were all for the better. Higher prices, less drink, less fighting. As a fair undoubtedly it was a success; as an entertainment it may possibly compare favourably with a funeral, which is almost the only other recognized form of amusement in the country districts of Kerry, where people living lonely and remote lives find, in the mere fact of a crowd of any kind, the occasional stimulus and excitement necessary to existence in the wild and desolate places of the earth.

Thirty thousand pounds, the Manager subsequently told me, had passed over the counter of the local Bank during the course of the Fair—a sum which would have seemed incredible to anyone unacquainted with the extraordinary financial arrangements of the Kerry farmer, to whom money is a mysterious and almost terrifying possession, which he never spends, but places on deposit at the Bank, where apparently it remains for all time: since, when desperately in need of money, he will borrow from the same bank at 6 per cent. or 7 per cent. rather than intrude on the nest-egg for which he may be receiving only 1 per cent. or at the most 2 per cent.

In no case is any surplus money made at fairs spent on improving the standard of living, people often with hundreds of pounds in the Bank giving an impression of poverty verging on starvation. That even the poorest-looking farmer has means at his disposal is proved by the sums forthcoming when it is a question of making nuns of his daughters or providing matches for his offspring. As in

France, every girl has a *dot*, so in Kerry every farmer's daughter has a "fortune." The bargaining for husbands and wives is done by the parents on market or fair days, and, over the inevitable glass of whisky, the future of the rising generation is arranged. The young people themselves, though never coerced if really unwilling, are seldom consulted, the parents haggling like any Whitechapel Jew over terms ; and often a match will fall through owing to the parents of the " boy " refusing to part with an extra heifer, or those of the girl holding on to a few pounds : a " fortune " taking, as a rule, the form of a mixed amount of cash and cattle. The extraordinary part of the bargain is that a girl never gets the benefit of her own fortune, which is invariably used as a dowry for the brothers and sisters of the bridegroom.

The wedding, when it finally comes off, is, of course, the occasion for a great deal of hilarity and refreshment, the female relations partaking of " sherry wine," or whisky mixed with raspberry vinegar to make it look like claret. The happy couple spend the afternoon driving round the country, followed and " hoorooshed " by the whole wedding party in cars and donkey-carts ; returning in the evening to the ancestral home of the bridegroom. The marriages thus arranged, it may incidentally be remarked, turn out, as a rule, no less satisfactorily—more so, perhaps—than if the young people had the arranging of matters themselves ; Irish people making not only excellent husbands and wives, but kind and affectionate parents to the swarms of children resulting from these mercenarily inspired unions.

## CHAPTER XIII

### A QUESTION OF BUTTER—CONSCRIPTION—THE BLOCKADE OF KILLORGLIN—A RAID

IN the spring of 1918 I went over to London, where I came in for two air-raids which I rather enjoyed : one in the middle of dinner, the other in the middle of the night. On neither occasion did I feel the slightest temptation to seek cover in the cellar. On the first I repaired with my hostess to the nursery, where the children slept, without even turning in their beds, throughout the most deafening crashes and bangs to which it has ever been my fate to listen. On the second, I remained firmly in bed, in spite of frantic appeals to descend to a lower floor, reflecting that the chance of my being killed was only one in a thousand or a million—I forget which—and that if I were it would save a great deal of trouble all round for me to be already “laid out” on my bed.

Apart from these diversions I found London much the same as usual : no outward or visible effects of the war except in the exorbitant prices of everything and a general snappiness of manner in shop assistants and bus conductors, obviously due to overstrained nerves ; not quite so much of the national self-sufficiency observable in the men who had not been out ; pathetic cheerfulness in those who had ; in their wives and mothers the same marvellous restraint and courage which is of the very foundations of the English woman’s

nature. Among the girls a certain cattishness to each other struck me as somewhat deplorable ; otherwise little outward change. Only one subject of conversation : Food Rations.

As to Ireland, I soon became painfully aware that though, in time, even the Rebellion might be forgotten, never would Ireland be forgiven for having butter when England could not even get margarine. Wherever I went, the heinousness of our national plenty was brought home to me. The less margarine there was on the table, the more people waxed sarcastic about butter in Ireland. Useless for me to proclaim Ireland's shortage in other commodities. We had no rations, no *queues* and plenty of butter—there was nothing more to be said.

Well, of course we had no rations although something in the way of them had been attempted. Did not two members of the R.I.C. call on me in person with a card entitling me to a restricted quantity of sugar from the local grocer, who gallantly informed me, when I presented it to him, that I need not be "troubling" myself on the matter, since there was "no regulation yet made that you could not drive a coach and four through in Killorglin."

As for *queues*—no self-respecting Irish crowd would ever line up in one. Unlike the docile English, who would patiently wait for three hours in the rain on the off chance of an ounce of margarine, the nucleus of a *queue* collecting outside a shop in an Irish town would inevitably lead to a street row. People with sufficient optimism to take up a position in the front row would certainly have their heads broken by the later arrivals, while, in the resultant general *mêlée*, the more enterprising onlookers would loot the shop. Would any pat of butter be worth so much disturbance?

Apart from the butter question I found little evidence of shortage in London. In no house in which I stayed did I ever suffer even a passing pang of hunger. People entertained as usual, only on a slightly restricted menu. The restaurants were as good as ever. It is no deprivation, at any rate to me, to go without meat, when fish and eggs and vegetables are to be had in sufficiency. But then in Ireland we do not set the same store by our food as they do in England, where people have been used for generations to four square meals a day, and to take prodigious exercise after one in order to get up an appetite for the next. In chronically underfed Ireland there was not the same necessity for rations. Our restricted appetites and incomes are a guarantee at any time against waste. Few, indeed, were the people in this country who could then afford to pay 2s. 9d. per lb. for butter, 10d. a lb. for sugar. Everybody did with less. The poor went without. I know plenty of families in which, in ordinary times, tiny children live on black tea, dry bread and potatoes, and often even the latter give out. In slightly more prosperous districts, meat, in the shape of a pig's head, is a Sunday treat, and an occasional egg may be forthcoming; but even among the small farmer class, which could afford something more appetizing, the same indifference to food prevails. Year in, year out, in peace and in war, the same monotonous, semi-starvation diet prevails and is responsible for more than half of Ireland's undigested troubles.

On returning home I found Ireland in hysterics at the prospect of conscription. A strike having been proclaimed as a protest, for weeks we had no trains, no posts, nothing but the wildest rumours; and Sinn Fein prepared to resist to the

last man. Republican "armies" sprang up in every district. Mysterious strangers, from nobody knew where, proceeded to initiate the inhabitants, by the light of the moon, in the art of "forming fours," a performance accompanied by much yelling and the beating of tin cans. My front gate being, for some time, the rendezvous of the belligerent youth of the neighbourhood, I sent them a request, by Dan, not to make quite so much noise. In return I received an assurance that the last thing they wished to do was to annoy me, and they gallantly moved on to the next gate down the road.

The following night, some time after I had gone to bed, I was awakened by the sound of a shot close to the house. I rang my bell several times—no response. I got up and went to the servants' rooms and found their beds empty. Complete darkness downstairs. A rush of wind met me in the kitchen passage, and I realized that the back door was open and the servants out. I locked the door and took up a strategic position on the back stairs. Soon after midnight I heard a tapping and let in the cook, giving her a month's notice as I did so; a little later the parlourmaid and, soon after her, the housemaid arrived. Having given each of them notice also, I retired to bed, my feelings slightly relieved by the sound of their sobs.

Next day I was told they were all members of the *Cumann-na-mBan* and that, every night, after I had gone to bed, they were to be found drilling at the gate and route-marching round the country with the "boys." The firing of the shot into their midst by some unknown person, in the wood above the road, had been their undoing. It created a panic, everybody had scattered precipitately; each



of the maids had fled home separately in a state of terror, culminating in complete collapse at the vision of "the mistress" in her dressing-gown at the back door.

Two nights later, the F——s were visited by a band of armed and masked men, the Colonel held up in his pyjamas, with revolvers pointed at his head, the house searched; two guns, a gold watch and a Treasury-note case containing five pounds having been eventually removed.

Caragh seethed with excitement. In the opinion of its inhabitants it was the quietest place in the world. To take an occasional gun was, of course, "no harm": what Caragh could not understand was the fact that any one of its inhabitants could have sunk to such depths of infamy as to take the Colonel's watch and his money.

The Post Office was full to overflowing when I arrived there. It was one of the few days in the week when Caragh held communication with the outer world. For the Great War which had upheaved Europe and brought empires into the dust had also left its mark on us. For three years there had now been no post out on Sundays or in on Mondays, while the Post Office was closed on Tuesdays for the sale of stamps and the despatching of telegrams—an arrangement which, while it may possibly have helped to win the war, undoubtedly led to congestion on Wednesdays in a place principally used as a Bureau of Information, and presided over by a Post Mistress addicted to making the most of the facilities afforded by her profession for the acquiring of local intelligence.

"The Colonel is in a terrible way," she remarked, displaying for the benefit of her audience the large bundle of letters she was engaged in stamping. "He's after writing three letters to

agents in Dublin to let the house for him, and one to the *Irish Times*—‘Lawlessness in Ireland’ it’s called ; and there’s been telegrams all the morning to the military and the police.”

The “Boots” from the hotel, throwing down a large leather bag, spat thoughtfully on the floor.

“Ireland will never be free now,” he remarked pessimistically.

An ardent Sinn Feiner of the type addicted to peaceable drilling on fine nights, he was sternly opposed to any display of belligerency—a substantial deposit in the savings bank making him view with leniency the occupation of Ireland by a moneyed, if alien, race of English tourists. At the same time he was at heart a true patriot, and in the disgrace that had fallen on the Sinn Feiners of Caragh it seemed for the moment as if the sacrifices of Wolfe Tone, of Emmett and Lord Edward Fitzgerald had been made in vain.

“Whoever done it,” said Jamesy Moyniham, the shoemaker, fiercely licking a stamp on a letter to his married daughter in America, “it wasn’t Sinn Feiners. There’s plenty of lads about who’d take the guns right enough, but only *blackguards* would take money.”

The gloom deepened in the Post Office. An exploit which would certainly have added lustre to the achievements of the local Republicans had it been confined to the raiding of the Colonel’s guns had degenerated into a common burglary, a crime without precedent in the country districts of Ireland.

“A low pack of robbers,” said the “Boots.”

“It must have been strangers,” suggested the Post Mistress.

A gleam of hopefulness radiated through the Post Office. It was significant of Celtic mentality

that, while everybody was perfectly aware of their identity, in no circumstances would anybody betray the criminals. An incident had occurred of which Caragh was thoroughly ashamed. In the circumstances nobody would accept responsibility for it.

"Strangers it was that done it," everybody agreed with everybody else. "Only a pack of common robbers would take money."

The crowd dispersed hopefully down the road.

The west wind was blowing softly across the bog. The lake lay shimmering in the April sunshine, its shores ablaze with golden gorse.

An armoured car, symbol of Britain's might, sent in response to the Colonel's telegraphic appeal to the forces of the Crown, lay helplessly across the road. Soldiers in tin hats hurried, with harassed countenances, around it. A youthful officer philosophically smoked a cigarette in the ditch. The grey, unwieldy monster, constructed to move with equal facility backwards and forwards and sideways, could not be prevailed upon to travel in any direction whatsoever. A Ford car, containing two policemen, paused to offer suggestions to the soldiers. The Protestant rector dismounted from his bicycle to discuss the outrage with the youthful officer.

"It almost makes me forget I'm a Christian," he remarked ; "I should like to *shoot* the scoundrels. Imagine taking *money* !"

At the house the Colonel explained to me : "It's not the bally guns I mind (the best ones I sent long ago to the barracks), but that they should take my money and my watch—good God ! what is the country coming to ?"

Nobody knew. The wildest rumours prevailed. More armoured cars appeared on the scene.

Aeroplanes were expected daily. Conscription, it was said, was to be carried out by force. Everybody was to be "taken," even the old age pensioners : a rumour which sent every man in the place in precipitate flight to the mountains. The priest told the women and girls in outlying districts to repair immediately to the towns for protection from the "brutal and licentious soldiers." *Black* troops, they said, were being sent to Ireland to terrorize the population. The origin of this scare intrigued me for some time. Eventually I traced it to its source. The Black Watch was under orders to proceed to Tralee.

Nothing, it will be seen, was too fantastic for the popular imagination, bursting with indignation at Britain's latest injustice, implying that the Irish were a subject race from whom tribute could be claimed without their consent. Coming at a moment when Ireland was fiercely asserting her right to national independence, its only effect was to unite all the conflicting Nationalist elements in the country : to drive practically all Ireland into the arms of Sinn Fein.

Whether the state of the Allied Forces justified it or not, one did not then know. When, a few months later, after four long years of blood and mud, of human agony, of material waste and destruction, the madness of the world at last came to an end, Sinn Fein Ireland was more than ever convinced that conscription had never been anything but a sinister political plot on the part of England. In any case, since it could not possibly have been carried out, it would have been wiser if it had never been attempted.

## CHAPTER XIV

### DUBLIN—ITS INTELLIGENTSIA—LOOKING FOR A FLAT

**A**FTER three months in Dublin, spent mostly in the hands of doctors, I found myself the following spring at home once more, poorer in spirit as well as in pocket.

I have always had rather a contempt for people who went in for operations. Never in any circumstances did I contemplate indulging in one myself; and if I had not gone to Dublin I imagine I never would. Finding myself, however, in the capital of Ireland, it was inevitable that I should fall into the clutches of the medical profession. Everybody who goes there does. Not even the healthiest can hope to escape. For one thing, there are nothing but doctors in Dublin. Every second house in every fashionable square and street has a brass plate on the door. There must be at least two doctors to every potential patient: one to operate and one to apply the anæsthetic. For myself, I struggled as best I could against delivering my body up to satisfy the curiosity of a Dublin specialist. Persuaded by friends to obtain medical advice, I had gone as far as making an appointment with one for a certain day, when my spirit rose in revolt. I wrote and said I was too ill to keep my appointment. This, unfortunately, only seems to have served to stimulate his professional curiosity, for within an hour he was at my bedside, and the next day I found myself, protesting furiously, in a

nursing-home where nobody paid the slightest attention to anything I said. A great deal more annoyed than ill, I made up my mind to die under the operation, if only for the satisfaction of supplying both the doctor and nurses with the unpleasant advertisement of an inquest in the Home. Entirely against my will, somehow I survived. Nobody except myself seemed in the least surprised. It was, I gathered, the usual procedure. By slow degrees I became not only accustomed to, but absorbed in, the atmosphere of the Home, developing a positively passionate attachment to the Doctor and the Matron. When the day of my departure approached, I wept and besought them to allow me to remain for ever. They kept me for another week, and then, once more, I found myself in a grey, unsympathetic world, no longer an object of solicitous consideration, the dissipated recipient of exotic fruit, and carnations at one and sixpence each. "There's nothing the matter with you at all," I was told, when, pale and wan, I suggested telephoning for the doctor. As a matter of fact, I felt much more ill after the operation than before. "People always do," they told me.

January froze itself into February; February rained itself out and March blew itself in with customary Irish violence. My convalescence established, I started to explore Dublin, where I had never stayed before except, as a bird of passage, for a few days in Horse Show time, or as a guest, in years gone by, behind the sheltered portals of the Viceregal Lodge.

In Ireland you will never hear anything but abuse of Dublin. Dirty, dingy, dull, decayed are the epithets usually bestowed upon it. It is all these and much more besides, which is perhaps not obvious, save to those who seek for something more

than the amusements generally associated with city life. For a capital, Dublin is astonishingly friendly. From the top floors of the houses in Stephen's Green one can see the Wicklow mountains, a fact which in itself preserves one from the devastating loneliness which the chimney-pots of most towns invariably convey, at any rate, to me. More fortunate than any town I know in its surroundings, in half an hour by train or tram you can be in the country, among the mountains or by the sea, on the wild foreland of Howth or on the lonely, sandy shores of Malahide. Squalid as are so many of the Dublin streets and slums, the fresh sea air blows up them with the tide ; while, in the muddy flats, where the Liffey runs out to the sea, the poorest gutter child finds chronic amusement searching for mermaids among the seaweed and the gulls.

For the rest, if the bridges are eyesores and the quays of an indescribable squalor, in her splendid buildings and her Georgian squares, what remains of eighteenth-century Dublin smiles on you and draws you to her heart, recalling to your memory her bygone days of extravagant splendour. And in the inhabitants of Dublin is reflected the surprising friendliness of their city.

In engaging familiarity, the shop people, instead of addressing you indefinitely as "Madam" or "Sir," call you by your name. "No grey silk stockings in stock to-day, Mrs. Mahony," says the shop-walker at Switzer's. "If you walk upstairs, Miss Murphy, you'll find our latest models on view."

"We have some new suitings in, Major, you may like to see."

And if you are very young : "Umbrellas, *child dear*, in the next room through."

If friendly, it must however be admitted that life

in Dublin is not very gay. For one thing there is very little private entertaining, and there are practically no restaurants. Somebody once tried to start a Night Club, but as the only available drink was cocoa, it did not have a long or hilarious existence. The various hotels provide indifferent fare under high-sounding names, *hanche de mouton a la broche* seeking to conceal its identity, on the printed *menu*, with the roast mutton with which all Ireland is so painfully familiar. Only at Jammet's is it possible to dine sumptuously ; and if a dinner once a week or once a month is sufficient nourishment for you, then you may be able to afford it at Jammet's. Such luxuries, however, are not for the people of Dublin, most of whom appear to subsist on an egg with their tea, and cocoa before going to bed.

Unlike England, where people are totally incapable of expressing themselves on any subject on which they feel deeply without first dining over it, at some of the famous " Dublin evenings " to which I was invited the most brilliant conversation was carried on to an accompaniment of tea and cake : A. E. (George Russell), poet, artist and mystic, in the chimney-corner of his house in Rathgar, discoursing on Bolshevism as only he can discourse on every subject under the sun ; W. B. Yeats emerging from his Celtic sleep to explain the mysteries of the occult to an enthralled, if unconvinced, audience ; James Stephens flinging shafts of humour and sarcasm round him, while handing tea and buns to the satellites surrounding him in his top-floor flat in Fitzwilliam Place.

Yeats I had previously met in London at the Mair's house in Walpole Street, and he had dined with us in Cheyne Walk, giving a *cachet* to the party by reading out his own poetry in the deep melodious



voice which is one of his chief charms. George Mair, who had married Maire O'Neill, the clever Abbey Theatre actress, was at that time London editor of the *Manchester Guardian* and one of the most brilliant young men of the day. After dining with them one night we all went on to Yeats's flat near Euston (which he said was the nearest spot he could find to Ireland in London), where he was always to be found on Monday evenings. Having left our wraps on the kitchen dresser on top of the poet's breakfast bacon, we were taken to the sitting-room which was draped with black and lighted with seven candles, with incense burning in a bowl on the mantelpiece. Sipping some strange vintage, we listened to our host's enthralling tales of a scullery-maid who, under hypnotic influence, had spoken perfect Greek, and of Levinska, a Polish medium, who, in a trance, had apparently fastened Yeats's pyjamas to the ceiling with a hatpin. After each story George Mair would tell Yeats he was the best liar he knew, to which Yeats would reply, "Yes, I was afraid you would think that," and would then tell another. About one o'clock in the morning, when we were preparing to go home, he told us of a man who had called on him and who was so clever Yeats felt he must be wicked—nobody normal could know so much. "More and more I kept thinking how wicked he must be, and at last I knew it, because suddenly I saw a huge green elephant standing behind him."

"I shouldn't let a little thing like that prejudice you, Yeats," said George Mair.

The unreal atmosphere in which they live undoubtedly gives to the minds of the Dublin *literati* the fantastic turn which each of them displays in different degree in their writings.—Or it may be the tea and buns on which they apparently

subsist. James Stephens, who looks exactly like one of the *leprechauns* he so charmingly describes, possesses the same impish humour attributed to these typically Irish sprites. One day, he told me, when his poetry and books were bringing him into the limelight, a telephone message came from the Vice-regal Lodge saying that two of the guests staying there, Lady Randolph Churchill and Lady Leslie, were anxious to make his acquaintance and with his permission would call on him that morning. James Stephens, to whom ladies of title were at that time more or less of an unknown quantity, awaited their arrival with some embarrassment, having, he said, no idea what to talk to them about. Lady Leslie, however, soon put him at his ease by talking of her son Shane Leslie, for whom he had a great admiration. Eulogizing and criticizing his work, James Stephens completely ignored the existence of Lady Randolph, who, no doubt feeling rather out of it, presently remarked: "I too have a son, Mr. Stephens."

"Oh, have you?" he replied with sudden interest; "and what is his name?"

*Lady R.* Winston Churchill.

*J. S.* Oh, that delightful writer of American novels.

*Lady R.* My son is not that Winston Churchill.

*J. S.* Oh, is there another?

*Lady R.* (*coldly*). Don't you read the newspapers?

*J. S.* Never.

*Lady R.* And you have *never* heard of my son?

*J. S.* (*stoutly*). Never; but do tell me about him—what does he do?

*Lady R.* (*vaguely*). He is at the Admiralty.

*J. S.* Ah, that accounts for my not having heard of him.

Both ladies had risen to their feet. James Stephens saw them down the stairs and into the Viceregal motor. As they drove away Lady Randolph put her head out of the window : " All the same, Mr. Stephens," she said, " you *have* heard of my son ! "

Mrs. J. R. Green, the historian, was another writer living then in Dublin whom I had known previously in London. She had a charming house in Stephen's Green, where she gave literary parties which, like her writing, I always found rather sticky. An uncompromising Nationalist, she had left London after the execution of Sir Roger Casement. She had moved heaven and earth to save him and took his fate terribly to heart. She was a curious woman, with snow-white hair, a mask-like face and a slow, deliberate manner of speech. She disliked women, but, though I never made much headway with her in London, she was very kind to me in Dublin. I would have liked to know her better, and asked her later to come and stay at Ard-na-sidhe. Unfortunately the visit did not materialize, but she wrote me in reply the following letter containing an interesting suggestion :

90 STEPHEN'S GREEN,

*Ap.* 8./19.

MY DEAR LADY GORDON,

How charming of you to write me so kind a letter of farewell. I was afraid you were suffering a good deal, and I wanted to see you before you left—and then I too got caught in the cold and could not go out. I ought to have written to explain.

It touched me to get your considerate letter and I would have answered before only for fresh bursting pipes !

I should much like to go and see you. I have

never been in Kerry and I really must go there. In these times one cannot see enough of one's own land, and of those who love it. I do hope to see your house, and your life in it, some day. I am sure it has good for all in and around it.

I have an instinct that for a long time to come the old hospitality will have to take another form, not less noble, of fellowship in all daily things. There are some things (material !) in the new world which have to change in the giving and in the receiving alike—but the main thing, the free intercourse of all who care for the same ideals, is more than ever needed. I have been thinking a good deal about the old forms of English hospitality and its evils, and the French form with its hard limitations. I wish we could be free enough in soul here in Ireland to invent a scheme of our own that would hurt no one, and help a common idealism.

Yours very sincerely,

A. S. GREEN.

In many ways Dublin is an uncomfortable place to live in for anyone who is not the fortunate possessor of a house of their own. The hotels, with one or two exceptions, are expensive and badly run. Such furnished houses as are to let are usually dilapidated, dirty and of unimaginable gloom. Lodgings are impossible. Flats as they are known in London and other towns, with the exception of one solitary block, are non-existent. What are advertised as "flats" usually consist of two rooms in a private house, with the use of a bathroom and a cupboard on the stairs described as a "kitchenette," fitted with a gas-ring and a sink.

Impelled by vulgar curiosity, I presented myself one day at the door of a house which, in the

columns of the *Irish Times*, advertised in the briefly descriptive Dublin fashion : " Flat to let, lady or gentleman, Protestant, dining out, partial attendance, electric light, telephone." The address given was in one of Dublin's most fashionable squares, and the house, I discovered as I rang the bell, belonged to a doctor. The advertisement, one of a hundred similar ones, intrigued me. What was " partial attendance " ? And what were the especial attractions of a " Protestant " lady or gentleman which seemed to make them so peculiarly desirable to the owners of houses in a Catholic town, since nearly every advertisement I saw laid special stress on this religious qualification ?

The entrance hall did not look very inviting. A glance at the girl who opened the door, and the time she took to do it, explained why the attendance was described as " partial." The doctor's wife, who personally conducted me upstairs, scrutinized me with a penetrating eye. Conscious of an uncertain and wavering Protestantism, I hoped she would not submit me to a searching examination of the Catechism, or ask for references from the Church of Ireland as to my adherence to its tenets in the event of my taking the flat, any chance of which, however, vanished the moment I saw it. Lace curtains hung threateningly over the plate-glass windows—which, like most Dublin windows, had apparently not been cleaned since the day they were first put in—hiding from view the only asset of the house : the sun shining cheerfully on the gardens of the square. We explored the bathroom, which had no hot water laid on, and the kitchenette, which had no light. I inquired as to the attendance, which was to be even more partial than, in my wildest moments, I had anticipated.

" You won't want much," said the Doctor's wife,

disposing decisively of any requirements I might be likely to imagine myself in need of ; “ a little dusting Maria could do for you—and of course she’d wash up your breakfast things, and she would answer the door and bring in the tea. . . . By the way,” she added, as an afterthought, “ I forgot to say the sitting-room would of course be wanted every day from two o’clock till four, for the Doctor’s patients.”

“ My sitting-room ! ” I gasped.

“ Yes,” she replied ; “ but you wouldn’t mind just for a short time like that.”

I eyed her severely.

“ I was looking for somewhere to *live*,” I remarked ; “ if I took this flat I should have to spend most of my time in the street, since I am to be out every day from two till four, and I am never to be in for dinner in the evenings. Four guineas seems an excessive sum for the few hours of the night and the early morning when I should be allowed to occupy it.”

“ I’ll make it three guineas if you like,” said the Doctor’s wife.

But by this time I was on the doorstep. At last I understood why a religious qualification goes with the letting of Dublin flats. Not all the consolations offered by the Church of Ireland, however, would ever induce me to take up my residence in one.

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In my absence events had been moving at home. Kerry had become suddenly famous. A policeman had been shot (fortunately not fatally). The Lord-Lieutenant had sent a wire expressing his indignation at the outrage. The *Irish Times*, in a leading article on it, had called (for the twenty-sixth time that month) on the Government for

firm and just administration of the law. A prominent member of the Southern Unionist Alliance had subjected the Chief Secretary to a searching cross-examination in the House of Commons on the state of affairs in Kerry. The Chief Secretary, in reply, had no information from Kerry or, apparently, from any other part of Ireland. No arrest had been made. According to the newspapers, a diligent search for the assailant had so far proved fruitless. The policeman was sitting up, and public interest in the affair subsiding, when Killorglin awoke one morning to find itself proclaimed a military area.

At no time a centre of much commercial activity, complete paralysis settled on the town as the result of the pronouncement. All business came to a standstill, while the inhabitants, propping themselves against the walls of its public-houses, viewed with a certain nervous apprehension the arrival in their midst of an armoured car, a tank—commonly supposed to be full of poison gas—several machine-guns, and a detachment of soldiers described in the local paper as “sated with blood and lust and victory.”

The blockade of the town having been ensured by the establishment on its bridges of these various engines of war, its inhabitants were next informed that permits from the military authorities would be required for anybody wishing to enter it.

Killorglin seethed with indignation. That the liberty of its population should be thus interfered with was an unspeakable outrage, for which the mere shooting of a policeman afforded no justification. As everybody knew, the affair was purely accidental—one of those regrettable incidents to which only ill-advised policemen would expose themselves. As Mrs. Daly remarked, “What right have

the police to be interfering with the people?" Mrs. Daly is the mother of fourteen children, "six of them buried," she will tell you with the proud satisfaction with which the poor in Ireland allude to their thus providentially disposed-of progeny. The surviving eight, ranging in age from five to fourteen, conforming with the spirit of the times, "stood to attention" on my arrival, "formed fours," and were only restrained from shouting "Up the rebels!" by an admonition from their mother to "Whisht, and have conduct." For Mrs. Daly, although an extremist in the matter of Sinn Fein, belongs to a family which for generations has been what she is pleased to describe as "rared on the gentry," and has not yet lost an inherent respect for the "quality" or a natural disinclination to offend their susceptibilities.

"Never yet did I give a foul face where I met a fair one, whatever way the wind would be blowing," she remarked, welcoming me into her cottage, incidentally sweeping a broody hen off the chair in which I was requested to seat myself.

Accustomed to Mrs. Daly's usually inconsequent conversation, I placed myself on the extreme edge of the chair, as far removed as possible from the position lately vacated by the hen, awaiting some explanation of the cryptic remark with which I had been greeted.

"Whoever it was that sent for them I don't know," said Mrs. Daly; "some says as how it was the Colonel, and more says as how it was the Canon."

"Sent for what?" I inquired.

"The soldiers."

"Of course the Colonel didn't send for them, nor the Canon," I replied. "No private person could do such a thing. It was the Government that sent



them because of the drilling and the raids for arms and the shooting of Constable Spillane."

"Sure he'd never have got shot at all, the craytur," replied Mrs. Daly, "if he'd minded his own business. What right had he to be up at Danny Murphy's at all that time of the night?"

"He was looking for arms," I replied.

"Looking for trouble," Mrs. Daly remarked with a sniff, "and he found it—and we all found it with the persecution that's been put on us by the soldiers."

"In what way do they persecute you?"

"Well, now, your ladyship, would you believe it? There was that little boy Batty," indicating her eldest offspring, "and meself driving into town yesterday morning, and a sack of turf inside in the ass-cart, and just on the bridge beyant on the road were two of them (Scotch by the look of them), and an officer with a small little cap on the side of his head. 'Shtop,' sez he, holding on to the ass by the bridle, 'where's your permit?' sez he. 'Permit is it,' sez I, 'and what would I be wanting a permit for, me that's travelled this road since I was born, by nobody's leave but my own.' 'You must have one now,' sez he, 'or I'll shoot you.' 'If you shoot me,' sez I, 'I'll shtrike you.' With that they all laughed. 'What have you,' sez he, 'in that sack?' 'What's that to you,' sez I. 'Come now,' sez he, 'and open it,' taking hold of the sack; and as it wasn't too well tied together at all, out fell all the turf on the road. 'Pick that up again,' sez I, 'and put it back in the sack. What right have you interfering with me—a poor woman that has done no harm to no one; sure wasn't your own mother a woman, and you'd have a right to remember it.' With that they all laughed again. But they picked up the turf and put it back

in the sack. ‘ Pass on,’ sez the officer, ‘ but don’t be coming into town again without a permit ’ ; but sure by that time hadn’t they Batty and me half-killed with the fright.”

“ Well, if they do nothing worse than that you won’t die just yet.”

“ They’ll do worse—same as they done before.”

“ What’s that ? ” I inquired.

“ Behead all the people and burn all the houses.”

“ When did they do that ? ”

“ ’Twas some time ago then.”

“ It must have been.”

“ ’Twas in 1641,” said Batty.

“ Hasn’t Batty the learning ? ” remarked his mother with pride. “ It’s a great scholar I’ll make of him.”

“ If he isn’t beheaded,” I suggested, preparing to take my departure.

“ The soldiers will kill all before them,” replied Mrs. Daly, relapsing into gloom. “ Killorglin is destroyed entirely, and all along of a *bosthoon* of a policeman who had a right to keep to his bed at night instead of trapesing about in the dark interfering with decent, quiet people who done him no harm nor anyone else.”

“ Up the ribils ! ” murmured Batty tentatively.

“ Whisht,” said his mother, “ didn’t I tell you to have conduct.”

## CHAPTER XV

### BATTLE, MURDER AND SUDDEN DEATH—CHRISTMAS— A STORY OF THE BLACK AND TANS

THE autumn of 1920 proved a terrible one of wind and rain, the beginning of what one felt instinctively would be a grey and dismal winter of bloody deeds and merciless revenge.

The Government's attitude to Ireland grew daily more recklessly vindictive. When, one wondered, would England ever understand Ireland? Every measure she adopted invariably had the exact opposite effect to that which she expected. Like an angry parent who knows that, eventually, he will be compelled to give in to the importunities of his growing family, England blustered furiously before the inevitable surrender.

The Nationalist Party went down because, in its thirty years of existence, it failed to obtain by constitutional methods the self-government which, since Parnell's day, had dangled in tantalizing fashion before the eyes of Ireland. Disappointed and irritated, the youth of the country threw its old leaders aside. Constitutional agitation had failed; England could not be cajoled. Over and over again history has shown that, to wrest a half-hearted measure of reform from her, she must somehow be horrified.

In 1916 Sinn Fein set out to horrify. England replied with two years of repression. In 1918 there were 1,100 political arrests; 260 private

houses were raided, innumerable meetings, fairs and markets were suppressed. In 1919 Ireland retaliated by shooting 16 policemen, who, having informed against local offenders, were looked on as spies and traitors to their country. In order to avenge their death, 1,400 houses were raided, 950 people were arrested, the Dail was suppressed, its leading members deported, every Sinn Fein organization in the country declared illegal ; with the result that policemen were murdered in ever-increasing numbers, more houses raided, and more arrests made, on any pretext : for speaking in Irish, for waving green flags, for collecting in the streets for " rebel " prisoners.

Under the monstrous régime of the " Black and Tans," so brutal did political coercion become, that murder, always Ireland's last resource, became inevitable.

It took all one's time and energy to fight the pessimism and hopelessness of everybody in the distracting situation.

" Things cannot go on as they are," murmured the less gloomy. But couldn't they? What was to prevent them? So long as England persisted in her policy of terror, so long would Ireland " throw herself about," murder and reprisal alternating with sickening recurrence.

And the hideous waste of it all, the loss to Ireland of so many of her ablest sons, like Terence MacSwiney, Lord Mayor of Cork, dying on a hunger strike, for an ideal which, whether he died or not, was bound to materialize within the next few years. Was he a great hero or a misguided idealist? Would not a man of his undoubted worth and genius have served Ireland better by living, instead of dying, for her?

Opinions differed. An aunt of mine, an un-

compromising Unionist, was so struck by the nobility of his motives that she stopped one day to eulogize him to an ardent Sinn Fein gardener.

"Although I do not agree with his politics," she remarked, "I cannot help admiring him; he must have been a wonderful man."

"Well, now," said the gardener, "*I* think he was a d——d fool."

\* \* \* \* \*

Battle and murder and sudden death were not long arriving in Killorglin: inevitable result of the advent, in our midst, of a batch of Black and Tans, brought in to reinforce the ranks of the R.I.C. which had been depleted by resignations.

The procedure leading up to these tragic events was the usual one prevailing in so many Irish towns at that time.

On a perfectly peaceful district there would suddenly descend a number of English, Scotch and sometimes Irish ex-soldiers, temporarily recruited for the purpose of terrorizing Ireland; subject to no especial training; their power limited by neither law nor discipline. The conditions of life under which they lived were not pleasant. Constantly harassed by the I.R.A., they could never go out on patrol, or leave the vicinity of their barracks, without laying themselves open to the risk of attack.

Shunned by everybody on principle, any effort to make themselves agreeable was met with relentless vengeance by the enemy. In Killorglin, as in many other places, the advances of the young men, who were well set up, and of more or less pleasing appearance, were at first not altogether unwelcome to certain young women in the town.

Having been seen in the company of the Black and Tans, their houses were forcibly entered one night by the I.R.A. and their hair cut off. Indignant at the insult paid to their newly acquired friends, the Black and Tans raided the Sinn Fein Club, damaged the billiard table and burnt the Republican Flag in the middle of the Square.

A few nights later, two Black and Tans, unarmed and in mufti, about to start on leave, were shot dead not far from the Barracks, on their way from seeing two girls home.

When, at midnight, their bodies were found and brought into the Barracks, their comrades rushed wildly into the town, pulled one of the leading traders out of his bed, into the street, where they shot him, burnt the Creamery and the Saw-mills (the property of almost the only Protestant in the town), looted the public-houses of whisky, and, firing indiscriminately in every direction, gave the terrified inhabitants so many hours to leave the town before they set it on fire.

On the following day, refugees poured out into the country. When darkness fell, only three men remained in possession of their homes. All through the night they sat waiting for the flames to rise, for the shots to burst forth.

Nothing, however, happened. Wiser counsels, from a member of an older and more disciplined force, the R.I.C., prevailed. The day of vengeance was postponed.

Passing from bad to worse, the winter crept on.

The murder, in cold-blooded ferocity, of the English officers in Dublin ; of Mrs. Lindsay ; of the Auxiliaries at Macroom, plunged all Ireland in gloom. Every day the tale of horror grew, each side vying with the other in deeds of ruthless

vengeance, every act of oppression by the forces of the Crown being met with increasing violence and crime on the part of the phantom Republican Army, ever eluding pursuit and capture.

Christmas came, and instead of peace and goodwill we had a terror in the country unparalleled in the history of our times, making a mockery even of the feeble festivities of the "Wren boys," who, divested of their trench coats and revolvers, and adorned with sashes and streamers of coloured ribbon, appeared as usual on St. Stephen's Day, somewhat sheepishly dancing in front of the house, swinging the body of a dead wren to the monotonous refrain :

"The wren, the wren is the king of all birds,  
On St. Stephen's Day he got caught in the furze.  
Although he's small, his family is great,  
Kind madam, come down and give us a treat."

A performance without which Christmas in Kerry would not be considered complete ; and which is followed, on St. Brigid's Eve, by a visit from the "Biddy boys," whose pleasantries are met with wild shrieks from the kitchen.

Otherwise, with the exception of the lighting of the Christmas candle, left burning in the window of every house and cottage in Kerry to welcome the Son of Man, in the event of his returning again to earth, the festival passed, with fear and distrust instead of peace and goodwill in the hearts of all. Nobody was happy. Nobody went to sleep who did not start up at the sound of a knock or a footstep outside. So poisoned was the atmosphere with suspicion, so great the terror of being overheard, and eventually burnt out or shot, that nobody made a statement or expressed an opinion in public or even in private, for, as an old man

whispered to me in confidence, "Your own son might be in it, and you not know."

\* \* \* \*

The one bright spot for me in the New Year was the fate which befell one of my most aggressively Unionist acquaintances.

Mrs. Carlton comes from the North. Her name, as a matter of fact, is not Carlton, but for obvious reasons I am unable to give her real one.

In early youth she made, as so many of us do, an ill-advised marriage. In her case the fatal step was political. She married into the South—an experiment in eugenics often recommended for the salvation of Ireland, which did not, however, in this case result in the salvation of either Mr. or Mrs. Carlton.

Ever since her marriage, twenty years before, Mrs. Carlton's life at Castle Carlton was a continual protest, against the climate, the people and "the state of the country."

"If it weren't for the Black and Tans," she was fond of asserting, "no decent person could live in it."

Her admiration for the Auxiliary forces of the Crown amounted to positive passion. "*The darlings!*" I have heard her exclaim, as they crashed in motor-lorries down the narrow roads, firing wildly at the terror-stricken inhabitants fleeing for life across the fields. In Dublin, where she took a house for the winter, their activities used to fill her with admiration. Castle Carlton having been twice raided by armed and masked Sinn Feiners, she dwelt, with all the rapture of satisfied vengeance, on the sleepless nights and harassed existence of the "rebels" under military rule; while every time a shot rang out in the stillness of the



hour after Curfew, she smiled at the thought of another Sinn Feiner gone to his doom, dismissing with indignation Mr. Carlton's suggestion that the Black and Tans were merely keeping their hands in by shooting cats.

Mr. Carlton never approved of the winter in Dublin. For generations his family had faced agitations of every description in the South, unmoved and unmolested. Like most Irish landlords, he loves, while he curses, his native land. He has never lived anywhere else and he dislikes being uprooted. For thirty years he has fished and shot and leant against a gate, looking into a field—an occupation he calls farming. It is a life which suits him admirably, and though he was certainly irritated when the Sinn Feiners raided his guns, it did not seem to him an adequate reason for exchanging the habits of a lifetime for a monotonous existence in the Kildare Street Club.

However, even Dublin was better than Ulster, which was the only alternative of which Mrs. Carlton would hear; and, having settled her into the house which they had taken in Fitzwilliam Place, Mr. Carlton himself returned, at the first opportunity, to Castle Carlton, on "urgent business." In his absence, he arranged for his nephew, Denis, to come up for a few days and keep his wife company.

Mrs. Carlton did not like Denis any better than she liked anybody else in the South. But though she considered him idle and extravagant, and suspected him of "pro-Irish" sympathies, he was a man: and as she belongs to a type which looks upon a man of any kind in the house as a protection in times of upheaval, she agreed to put up with him.

It did not, however, look as if Denis was going

to be much company, still less protection to her, on the first night of his stay. About seven o'clock he arrived, and, after less than two minutes' conversation, he rushed out to dinner; and in spite of his aunt's strict injunctions to be in by ten o'clock—Curfew hour—he had not returned at half-past eleven. Mrs. Carlton sent the servants to bed. She had finished the *Morning Post*, which she delighted in for its intelligent grasp on all matters connected with Sinn Fein, Bolshevism and the Jews. The fire was burning itself out in the drawing-room grate, and she was just meditating on the attractions of bed, when a violent knock resounded on the front door.

Mrs. Carlton ran down the stairs and opened the door. But instead of her nephew, a tall and powerfully built stranger, in a mackintosh, with a soft hat pulled down over his face, pushed past her into the hall.

"For God's sake, let me in," he gasped; "the Black and Tans are outside."

"Certainly not," said Mrs. Carlton. "Go out at once," pushing him towards the door.

"Don't be so hard on a fellow," said the stranger. "I tell you they're just outside—at the corner of the street. They'll arrest me."

"I *hope* they will," said Mrs. Carlton, scenting a "rebel," if not an escaped murderer. "I'll tell them to," she added, rushing down the steps to the military lorry a few yards away, falling headlong in the dark into the arms of a khaki-clad figure.

"Come to my house!" she exclaimed breathlessly, dragging him by the arm.

"Not to-night, ducky," said the Black and Tan with a grin. "S'm other evening, perhaps," he added encouragingly, endeavouring to loosen himself from her frenzied grasp.

"Chuck her in!" shouted a voice from the lorry.

"How *dare* you?" screamed Mrs. Carlton, finding herself dragged between two new-comers on to the step.

"'Urry up there!" shouted a voice. "Ain't going to stop here *all* the bloomin' night, are we?"

A frightful heave, and Mrs. Carlton found herself hurled on to the seat, as the lorry plunged forth into the darkness past her house, the door of which, she perceived with horror by the light of the lamp, was tightly shut.

"This is all a dreadful mistake," she began. A revolver placed against her cheek cut short the explanation she was about to make. She looked around helplessly. In addition to the dozen or so Black and Tans, she perceived only one other prisoner—a boy of about sixteen, with what she was in the habit of describing as a "rebellious face." Even more terrified than herself, he was making a wild effort to jump out. A blow on the head from the butt-end of a rifle stretched him unconscious at her feet.

A moment later the revolver against her cheek was withdrawn—a shot rang out—a piercing scream rent the air. Under a lamp-post a small black object wriggled in its last convulsive death agony. So it *was* cats, Mrs. Carlton realized, with a squirm of terror. Cats were her only weakness.

"I must protest——" she began. The click of the revolver against her cheek, the glint of a bayonet against her knees, and Mrs. Carlton slid helplessly into unconsciousness at the feet of her captors.

When she awoke she found herself in a white-washed cell lying on a plank, a spotty-faced wardress endeavouring to restore the circulation to her frozen limbs.

“ Where am I ? ” she murmured.

“ In the Bridewell, dearie.”

Mrs. Carlton faded away once more into the realms of unconsciousness.

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The longest night God ever made at last broke to dawn. But it was past midday when, after a meal of watery cocoa and musty bread, Victoria Carlton (age forty-two), wife of Valentine Carlton, of Castle Carlton and 100 Fitzwilliam Place, found herself in the presence of a police magistrate, listening to the charge against her of loitering in the streets of Dublin after Curfew.

“ *Loitering !* ” exclaimed Mrs. Carlton. “ I was *running*.”

“ Five shillings,” said the magistrate.

“ I *must* explain——” said Mrs. Carlton.

“ Five shillings,” snapped the magistrate ; “ and if she hasn’t it on her,” he added to the inspector, looking unsympathetically at Mrs. Carlton’s black lace evening-gown, hanging in ribbons round her, “ send a constable home with her in a cab to fetch it. Next case, Sergeant.”

\* \* \* \* \*

I had the story from her nephew.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE NEW HYGIENE—BRIDGET MARY AND MARY BRIDGET—THE BLEEDING STATUE OF TEMPLEMORE

**I**N no country in the world is it possible to talk so much and to make so little impression as in Ireland. As promoter and president of the local branch of the Women's National Health Association I all but lost my own lungs in my efforts to save those of my neighbours from the onslaughts of tuberculosis.

Nothing, however, that I could say on the question of hygiene had any effect, for the reason that nobody in Kerry believes in anything but tradition in such matters. Being myself easily discouraged, I have all the more admiration for people who persist in a new doctrine in Ireland. It is related of Sir Horace Plunkett that he addressed fifty meetings before a single society resulted from his efforts to organize Irish agricultural life on the basis of co-operation. In the end he won, not only against apathy but against the violent opposition of politicians and press. Equally to be admired was Lady Aberdeen, who, instead of devoting herself, as Vicereine, to the entertainment of Dublin, organized the women of Ireland into associations for fighting consumption: a plague which was decimating the population almost as much in the country districts as in the towns.

Owing to her unconquerable determination, branches sprang up in every county. Some suc-

ceeded beyond expectation, others failed—ours among them. It may have been my faults. Fanatical conviction is, I believe, one of the first qualifications of a leader, and in my inmost heart I never could feel convinced of the benefit of being cured of consumption in order that you may ultimately die of cancer, which, according to statistics, is what usually happens, since, as soon as one disease decreases, another increases, and anyway “we’ve got to die of something,” as the Secretary lugubriously remarked.

However, the Branch was started with intense enthusiasm and the whole neighbourhood flocked to the inaugural meeting addressed by Lady Aberdeen, who came down especially from Dublin for the purpose. The priest and the parson and the Nationalist M.P., the Rural Councillors and the leading magnates assembled on the platform; Her Excellency opened the proceedings with a speech on tuberculosis which, if it mystified some of the audience, undoubtedly impressed the rest. The spirit of Reform filled the hall. There was literally nothing we did not undertake to carry through, from the sweeping of the streets to the establishment of a District Nurse and a Babies’ Club. Promises of subscriptions, offers of help poured in. Not a creature in the hall but was carried away on the irresistible tide of enthusiasm produced by the prospect of the New Hygiene.

No crusade was ever started with more resolute determination. For a whole year the Committee, impartially recruited from Catholics and Protestants, from country and from townspeople, met every month. There were no lack of problems to tackle. Killorglin is a town of 1,300 inhabitants. In one of its principal streets there are no sanitary arrangements whatever. In another, several houses

have large back yards to which there is no access save through the houses themselves : cows, ponies and donkeys being led through the living-room and the shop from the stables to the street. There were no dustbins or receptacles of any kind for the rubbish, the owners of the shops throwing rabbit skins, potato parings, bones, papers and filth of every description out of their front door into the street, where it lay for days in heaps, scratched up by dogs and blown by the wind, until such time as the local contractor found it convenient to remove it. Tuberculosis was rife ; outbreaks of typhoid occurred from time to time. In one house, where we heard of a case, the victim had been complaining for some time of a damp spot in her kitchen wall, subsequently discovered to be caused by a leak from the town drain which went under the floor—almost, if not quite, equal to the sanitary condition of a neighbouring town, where the open main drain of the town still flows, I believe, through the Infirmary yard.

For a whole year we drew up resolutions and wrote letters to the Local Government Board, the Congested Districts Board and to every other Board and Council in Ireland, making ourselves thoroughly objectionable to them all. Nobody, however, paid any attention to our appeals, with the exception of the Roman Catholic Bishop, who lamented, in a letter to the *Cork Examiner*, that we should have thought it necessary to ask for an inquiry over the death, from typhoid, of three patients in the Killarney Infirmary ; and the local curate, who sarcastically remarked of the Killorglin Women's National Health Committee that "not half of them had their own necks washed."

The interest in what was known usually as "tubergoloshes" died down.

Gradually the flame of the New Hygiene began to burn low. One by one the younger members of the Committee, recruited from the town, faded away. As they had never been particularly helpful, except at jumble sales, they were not greatly missed. When the War came and we burst out in Red Cross lectures and First Aid classes, some of them reappeared. The spirit of Hygiene seemed fanned once more into flame. Eventually it dawned on us that the bellows responsible for the rekindling was not enthusiasm for Belgium : still less for England. Somehow, in some inexplicable manner, we seemed to have become involved in the meshes of the *Cumann-na-mBan*. Personally, so long as the young women of the neighbourhood learnt the principles of nursing, or of anything that would keep them from strolling aimlessly, by day and night, up and down the town, I did not mind whether they subsequently bandaged "Tommies" or Irish Volunteers. But the feelings of some of the Unionist members of the Committee were outraged, and they left. Eventually the doctor said he was too busy to continue with the classes, and they lapsed.

For two or three years, what was left of us struggled on, fighting tuberculosis and tradition. We even embarked on an Infant Welfare Centre. The Congested Districts Board lent us a field, and on fine mornings the babies of the town were collected in a perambulator, by a woman engaged for the purpose, deposited on the grass and encouraged with milk and sweets and toys to play in the open air.

But, after a time, the question of social precedence brought the Infant Welfare Centre to grief. In its ignorance of local etiquette, the Committee had not realized that, in every Irish town, are as



many classes as there are castes in India. Where the O'Sullivan's went was no place for the Miss O'Malleys ; while a Murphy from the Lane, who had a lump on its head, was suspected of having given a deadly disease to no less than three youthful MacCarties, who lived in the more exclusive square. In a place "where you'd never know who you'd be mixing with," anything might happen ; and when the District Nurse, who visited the playground twice a week, suggested weighing the babies, the *coup de grâce* was given to the centre. Every mother withdrew her offspring in indignation. "Was anything ever more likely to bring ill luck on a child?" they protested. In vain we assured them it was the usual custom in every Babies' Club and Infant Welfare Centre in the world. Nobody would hear of it. No child could be expected to survive such a flouting of Providence as being put in a weighing scale. In her anxiety to insure the "luck" of a child, no self-respecting mother will even allow it to be washed for ten days after birth, a ring of dirt on the head of a new-born baby, called a "cradle cap," being considered of especial importance in its future welfare. In the mountainy districts of Iveragh, where the fairies take an active and jealous interest in the arrival of new-born babies, the most elaborate precautions are taken at confinements. To facilitate the arrival of the child into the world, the wedding ring of the prospective mother is removed, the clock stopped, every cupboard and box opened. When the latter contains money it is not always an easy matter to prevail upon the man of the house to unlock it. In such instances, when reluctantly persuaded, perhaps by the exigencies of a protracted delivery, to do so, he will sit for hours with his eye glued to the box, while, at the sound of the first

scream from the baby, he will hastily lock it again. Since the fairies are fond of stealing new-born infants, the entire household sits up with it all night, from the moment of its birth until after the christening. In one case I have known, where considerable danger of intervention was anticipated, nobody went to bed or undressed for a whole month.

Sometimes it is the mother who is taken, or "swept." The District Nurse, "so great in herself" with the New Hygiene, may diagnose "sepsis," but the old women—those terrible, amazing old women, without whom no birth or death is possible in a Kerry cottage—know that she has been carried away by the *Sidhe* and that, since the corpse they are "waking" is not really hers, but that of somebody substituted for her, she will eventually return to her husband and her home from the Fairy Rath to which she has temporarily been borne.

In the circumstances, the hopelessness of attempting to interfere in the sacred traditions of birth-rites and customs became apparent. Three nurses in turn having given us notice, the two remaining members of the Committee, the Secretary and myself, came at last unanimously to the melancholy conclusion that, since nothing we said would ever make any impression on Killorglin, we might as well cease from our efforts and close the Branch.

The incredulity with which our suggestions in the cause of Health were met was all the more humiliating in the face of the blind acceptance by the inhabitants of Kerry of the most fantastic claims by the Church, the most startling of which were the miraculous cures effected by the bleeding statue of the Virgin at Templemore, with which all Ireland was ringing in 1921.

Professor Haldane, in *The Inequality of Man*, gives an interesting account of the strange effect of a certain bacillus which produces red patches exactly like blood on bread, and which, as the "bleeding Host," was used in the past in proof of the doctrine of Transubstantiation and was responsible in the Middle Ages for the wholesale torture and massacre of unbelievers. He also describes the effect of red ochre on human bones and tells of the discovery of the skeletons of two gigantic paleolithic men found near Milan and claimed by St. Ambrose in the fourth century as the remains of early Christian martyrs, and who, under the names of St. Gervaise and St. Protasus, effected the most miraculous cures.

The "bleeding" statue at Templemore was no doubt equally capable of scientific explanation, but, since no subject is more frowned upon in Ireland than Science, it did not occur to anybody to investigate the cause of this strange occurrence, which was accepted by the Catholic population with the same unquestioning belief which distinguished the Middle Ages (an era in which Ireland still largely lives to-day).

The remarkable discoveries and developments of Science in the last fifty years had certainly not been made manifest to Bridget Mary, who had been crippled for years with sciatica, or to her niece, Mary Bridget, who had suffered since infancy from fits, and who lived together, not far from me, in a whitewashed cottage on the edge of a cliff, against which the tempestuous waves of the Atlantic have hurled themselves with varying violence for untold thousands of years. Something of the endurance of the rock seemed to have entered into the souls of Bridget Mary and Mary Bridget. It never occurred to either of them to repine at their

fate or to invoke medical aid in order to mitigate their sufferings, which they apathetically accepted as the will of God.

It was Michael Quinlan, I gathered, who first suggested the possibility of a cure. He himself was a martyr to lumbago and had some difficulty in negotiating the rocky "bohereen" which separated his cottage from that of his neighbours.

Seated in front of their smoky turf fire, I found him one day reading out from a much-worn copy of the *Irish Independent* an account of the miraculous cures effected at Templemore.

"I am asking Mary Bridget would she like to be cured," he explained, as I seated myself among the neighbours assembled in the kitchen.

"I dunno," replied the epileptic doubtfully; dimly conscious, at the back of her somewhat vacant mind, of the *kudos* achieved for her by her fits in a place where, indeed, they proved almost the only source of excitement to her and her neighbours. But her aunt was emphatic. She had lived longer than her niece in Kerry and was therefore better able to realize the social effect which a miracle would produce.

After an excited discussion in which we all took part, it was finally decided that the two women, with Michael Quinlan and the Widow Clancy, who, since the death of her husband, had been subject to a "weakness" and whose baby's feet turned in, should all make a pilgrimage to Templemore.

Owing to a difference of opinion between the engine-driver and the military occupiers of the country, there had been no trains in Kerry for over a month. There was, therefore, obviously nothing for it but to hire Sweeney's motor-car for the occasion; Michael Quinlan, who had been

profiteering in pigs to an almost incredible extent, making himself responsible for the larger share of the expense.

The whole countryside, including myself, assembled to see the start. Sweeney's motor (which arrived an hour late) was not a conveyance to inspire anyone who did not possess an implicit belief in a Divine Providence with any feeling of confidence. Having long ago parted with any superfluous nuts and screws and springs, as it leapt wildly over the holes and ruts of the "contract" road the feeling of intense grandeur with which the party had started gradually gave way, I gather, to one of acute misery.

"Motoring is a fright," remarked Bridget Mary, who subsequently gave me the following graphic description of the expedition.

"The cold of the world is between me shoulders," said the Widow Clancy.

It was soon after leaving Limerick, she related, that, as the car swung round a sharp corner, the challenge rang out and the car came abruptly to a standstill in front of a military barricade across the road.

A sentry in khaki, armed with a rifle and a bayonet presented at the charge, demanded the permit of the driver. In the excitement of the moment, Patsy Shea, who had two permits, a Government one and a Sinn Fein one, produced the latter out of the wrong pocket ; whereupon the sentry called out the guard, and some fifty soldiers, armed to the teeth, surrounding the car, ordered the driver to be searched.

The Widow Clancy fainted away. The baby slid from her lap to the bottom of the car. Mary Bridget was in two minds whether to "throw a fit" or not, but, deciding that the audience did

not look sufficiently sympathetic, uttered, instead, a succession of piercing screams.

Bridget Mary took command of the situation.

"It won't surely take *all* of yez to kill us ; for God's sake somebody hold the baby !" she shrieked, throwing it into the arms of the N.C.O., "and some of you bloody murderers get a sup of whisky for the Widow Clancy before she dies on us."

The N.C.O., completely overpowered by the screaming infant, collapsed into the ditch. A lance-corporal fled down the road into a public-house in search of the whisky, while Bridget Mary held the prostrate form of her companion in her arms.

Meanwhile Patsy Shea was endeavouring to make the best of an unfortunate situation.

"What is this?" inquired the leader of the searching party, holding up in his hand a policeman's baton extracted from Patsy's pocket.

"Just a bit of a shtick," replied Patsy, who, a motor-driver by day, followed by night the calling of a Sinn Fein policeman.

"And how did these come into your possession?" holding up a number of cartridges.

"I couldn't say," said Patsy, "unless you put them there yourself. They don't belong to me at all," he expostulated as he was led away under arrest.

"You will have to get out of the car," said the sergeant to the occupants.

"Don't be talking," said Bridget Mary ; "don't you see we can't shtir, being cripples on our way to Templemore to be cured by the bleeding statue of the Virgin Mary?"

The sergeant, whose orders were to detain all suspicious motors and to place their occupants under arrest, finding the situation not covered by Field Service Regulations, Part I, was nonplussed.

A Presbyterian from Lancashire, more than ever did he curse the fate which had sent him on such a mission in a "heathen" land. He scratched his head and went for his superior officer.

Eventually, after many searching cross-examinations, it was decided to detain the car-driver only, the pilgrims being transferred to another motor and allowed to proceed to Templemore.

By this time the September day was drawing to its close. It was midnight before the scene of the pilgrimage was reached. Every hotel and lodging was full. Huddled together in the motor, the cripples slept fitfully on the roadside. Early in the morning, one by one, they were carried or assisted to the shrine containing the miraculous statue.

\* \* \* \* \*

Some days later Bridget Mary was to be seen hobbling on two sticks down the "bohereen" past Michael Quinlan's cottage, Mary Bridget walking in sprightly fashion beside her, her formerly vacant expression replaced by one of intense radiance.

From the little window at the end of the room where I was sitting with the bed-ridden Michael, graphically relating his experiences, we could see them. So far as he was concerned, the expedition had not been a success. In addition to having to pay for two motor-cars (fifteen pounds in all), the exposure to the night air and the shock caused by the military ambush had resulted in considerably aggravating the lumbago from which he had been suffering. The local doctor (at the cost of another pound) had held out little hope of recovery.

"The Blessed Virgin," he remarked resentfully, as he watched Bridget Mary and Mary Bridget proceeding on their way, "is a wonder for legs and fits, but she's no damn good for a back at all!"

## CHAPTER XVII

### RAILWAYS—REPRISALS AND RAIDS—THE GENTRY AND THE SOUL OF IRELAND—THE TRUCE

WE never appreciate our blessings until we have lost them, and nobody ever had any idea what a wonderful affair the Farranfore-Cahirciveen railway was until it was closed down. Before the proclaiming of the Irish Republic it was one of those branch lines, only met with in Ireland, which lead nowhere in particular, which have few passengers, even less traffic and no history. But since that epoch-making event, it became the scene of one startling occurrence after another.

First, there was the episode of the wagon of ammunition consigned to the military camp at Glenbeigh. According to the stationmaster's evidence, he had been forcibly seized and locked into the booking office at Farranfore, while the wagon was removed from the siding by armed men, who pushed it for some distance up the line, where, denuded of its contents, it was subsequently run into by the next morning's mail, with disastrous results to both.

After that, it became a popular pastime with the bright and enterprising youth of the neighbourhood to raid the train. On three separate occasions the engine was boarded and the mails abstracted at the point of the revolver. Whereupon the military rulers of Ireland decreed that an armed



guard should, in future, walk along the line beside the train. While this procedure in no way interfered with the normal rate of progress of the Cahirciveen "Luxe," as a military achievement it could not be considered altogether a success ; as, on the third morning, the military guard fell into an ambush. Several shots were fired from behind a hedge, two soldiers were wounded, and the rest, casting away their rifles, fled precipitately over the fields.

The competent Military Authority, having come to the end of his resources and of his intelligence, ordered the closing of the line. Under ordinary circumstances, as a reprisal, this would have entailed little hardship on the community in general ; but the Black and Tans having previously deprived us of our motors, and the Sinn Feiners having blown up the bridges and rendered the roads impassable with trenches, the result was that we were doomed to live in complete isolation, without letters or newspapers, unable to communicate with the outer world, save by telegram ; dependent, for our food, on local donkey-carts and an occasional horse and car, which, at exorbitant cost, conveyed supplies over the fields and through the rivers between Killarney and Cahirciveen.

If the object of the authorities was to starve us, they were not successful ; for no sooner did the Black and Tans prohibit the holding of a market in one town, than it was immediately held in another : and if they threw baskets of eggs about the streets and chased the country vendors out of the town at the point of the bayonet, as they did in Killorglin, it was only natural that other means would eventually be found for the disposing of agricultural supplies.

Meanwhile, under the usual policy of reprisal, each side vied with the other in destruction and revenge.

The procedure was always the same.

An I.R.A. was arrested.

Reprisal—Two Black and Tans were shot.

Government reprisal — Four (rebel) cottages burnt.

Sinn Fein reprisal—Four loyalist houses burnt.

And so it went on, neither side having anything to its credit ; with every act of retaliation, the bill for compensation mounting higher and higher, with mutual fear and hatred waxing ever stronger.

If it was a war, then surely it was the most ignoble ever waged between two supposedly civilized nations. But England never recognized it as such ; and indeed it would be difficult to describe as “ war ” a struggle in which neither side ever met, or tried to meet, in battle, and in which one side (the British) was always at a disadvantage, because for ever pitted against an invisible enemy.

Looked at from an impartial point of view, if such an outlook is at all possible in Ireland, it is difficult to see what other form of warfare Ireland, with her lack of artillery and modern instruments of destruction, could have pursued. Since the British Empire could devise no more intelligent form of conquest than was to be found in the methods of the Black and Tans, it succeeded ; and her methods, dark and hideous as they were, were justified.

As it was, murders and ambushes conducted by the I.R.A. became invested in the hearts of the people in Ireland with the same imperishable glory distinguishing the feats of the Allies in the battles of the Somme and the Marne : equally proud tales of the “ boys ” being related round the cabin fires of Kerry as were told in English villages, during the War, of soldier heroes in the

trenches of Flanders. That only by such deeds of horror could Ireland hope to establish her claim to independence must always be to the discredit of England, from whom each grudging act of political justice has always been wrested by murder and outrage. On the other hand, in Ireland are too many sinister aspects for one to apportion all the blame to England. If the English are not so evil, the Irish are not quite so holy as they imagine themselves to be. Let us admit that Ireland, with her religious anæmia ; her refusal to respond to progress ; her endless suspiciousness ; her empty rhetoric and petty limitations, underneath which, to a great extent, her fine ideals and her spiritual grace are hidden, must be an irritating neighbour to England, whose large views and hard common sense, combined with her talent for compromise, have resulted in a rich and amplified life of successful enterprise in which Ireland is her only failure. Alternatively oppressing and propitiating us, unlike the generality of her enemies, for centuries she has been unable either to kill or cure us. Constitutionally united, spiritually and mentally the two countries are poles apart. The Union could no longer be maintained. Once Ireland had awakened out of the twilight sleep in which the Gaelic League brought painlessly forth the new conception of Irish Nationality, the political domination of England was doomed. Whether we lived or whether we perished our destiny, one realized, was in the hands of Sinn Fein.

\* \* \* \* \*

One night in June all our boats were taken. It was a wonderful, still, moonlight night, and I was awakened about 2 a.m. with the noise of tramping feet. Looking out of the window I saw

lights and heard men's voices down by the boat-house. Suspecting some deed of darkness, but being powerless to avert it, I returned to bed. Later, as the day began to break, I looked again and, in the misty dawn, saw a long procession of boats, nineteen in all, being rowed in single file up the lake, in the direction of Lickeen, G.H.Q. of the local I.R.A., where, it was rumoured, several hundred men "on the run" were encamped. An ideal spot for the purpose, rendered doubly safe by this their latest enterprise, since they could not be approached either by water or land; every road leading to their mountain fastness having been long ago rendered impassable by means of gaping trenches, twenty feet wide and ten feet deep, and blocked with boulders rolled from the rocky heights above.

Every means of locomotion—trains, motors, bicycles and boats—having been taken, the only occupation left us was the Contemplation of the Infinite from the depths of a garden chair. Fortunately, the weather lent itself to this mystic pursuit—the days were perfect, windless, cloudless. Since I could not be on the Lake, I lay on the heathery bank beside it, listening to the lapping of the water: the only sound in a strangely silent world, unbroken by a distant railway whistle or motor-horn; gazing at the misty mountains rising, beyond the wooded slopes, on the farther shore, "squandering," with Rabindranath Tagore, "the days in futile song."

If you would be idle and sit listless and let your pitcher float  
on the water,

Come, oh, come to my lake.

The grassy slope is green and the wild flowers beyond  
number—

Your veil will drop to your feet.

Come, oh, come to my lake if you must sit idle—

If you would leave off your play and dive in the water,

Come, oh, come to my lake.

Let your blue mantle lie on the shore, the blue water will cover and hide you.

The waves will stand on tiptoe to kiss your neck and whisper in your ears.

Come, oh, come to my lake if you would dive in the water.

If you must be mad and leap to your death, come, oh, come to my lake.

It is cool and fathomlessly deep.

It is dark like a stream that is dreamless.

There in its depths nights and days are one and songs are silence.

Come, oh, come to my lake if you would plunge to your death.

Life, so impossible in the circumstances, became more than ever a mystery it seemed idle to question. Better, I felt, to accept it and to pass on, clinging to the beauty we could still make our own on summer days.

To compensate for the dullness of our days, our nights grew hectic. Every house on the Lake was raided. Nobody went to bed, except L——, who was staying in the house, and myself, and even we could hardly call going to bed a performance which consisted mainly in hanging, in our dressing-gowns, out of our bedroom windows, instead of sitting up, like other Christians, in our clothes in the drawing-room.

Our turn was bound to come, and I am thankful to say it took place at an hour when we were still up and suitably attired.

We were contemplating bed, when I said I heard the tramp of feet.

“Nonsense,” said L——. “It’s the wind.”

I pointed out that there was no wind.

“It’s getting up,” she replied, advancing to the pianola, into which she proceeded to fix a roll.

As she seated herself and planted her feet on the pedals, a fox-trot broke out upon the midnight air.

In the course of its less distressingly blatant refrains, I heard a knocking at the glass door outside the drawing-room, leading to the terrace.

"For goodness' sake," I besought her, "L——, stop that infernal noise."

L—— thumped on, unheeding.

A terrific rattle of glass.

I went out and opened the door.

A gigantic creature in the semi-uniform of the I.R.A., astonishingly good-looking, with a small black moustache, stepped lightly inside, while the clatter of rifles, and the glint of revolvers in his rear, pointed to a following prepared for death or victory.

"We are sorry to disturb you," said Adonis, in a soft, seductive voice, "but we want the battery of your car."

I breathed again. The car did not belong to me but to L——. Necessity, in the shape of revolvers, would at last compel her to put an end to that distracting tune. I put my head in at the drawing-room door and, in the hollow accents employed (I believe) by the criminal classes when visited by the police, exclaimed :

"L——, you're wanted !"

Even then she waited to respond until the last note had brayed itself out, and the roll had collapsed hopelessly on the winder, before rising from her chair.

"They want the battery of your car," I explained, as she advanced to the door, through which, in the moonlight, innumerable figures in the panoply of war could be discerned on the terrace.

"But I haven't got it," said L——. "The Black and Tans commandeered it long ago."

Adonis smiled.

"We have information," he replied firmly, "that you have got it."

L—— protested. Weeks ago, she said, her permit had been cancelled by the forces of the Crown, and the battery removed to the Police Barracks.

Adonis knew better.

"Ladies," he remarked gallantly, "don't always understand about motor-cars. Your battery is here and we have got to take it."

"Wasn't it the magneto," I suggested, "that was sent to the barracks?"

L——'s calm was momentarily broken. Nothing could have been calculated to annoy her more than to suggest that she did not understand the mechanism of a car.

"It may have been the magneto," she replied loftily, "but I thought it was the battery. In any case, you can't possibly have it. The garage is locked. The chauffeur has the key, and he lives over a mile away."

Adonis sighed. "It's very disagreeable for us," he remarked, "but we have our orders and we must obey them." Beckoning to a satellite, half hidden in the fuchsia growing against the wall, "Get on your bicycle," he said, "and fetch the chauffeur." Lighting a cigarette he leant peacefully against the door.

"A beautiful night," he drawled between the puffs of smoke.

"So beautiful," I remarked acidly, "that perhaps you won't mind spending the rest of it outside. We were going to bed when you arrived. The chauffeur no doubt will attend to your wants."

He bowed, retreated down the steps and joined his comrades on the terrace. I locked the door, drew the curtains, and we went upstairs. But not to bed. From the landing windows we watched

for the arrival of the chauffeur. The moon had hidden itself behind a bank of cloud. It was very dark, but in the avenue we could dimly discern figures moving among the trees. In less than an hour we heard the tramp of feet on the road, the clanging of the gate, and a procession, in the midst of which the reluctant chauffeur could be seen, marched up the drive. They disappeared under the archway leading to the yard. A few moments later they reappeared with the battery, formed up with shouts at the gate and vanished into the night, leaving, we subsequently discovered, sentries posted at various strategic points to ensure that no one left the house to give information.

"Extremely tame," we decided, as we brushed our hair before getting into bed.

But later, we realized the military importance of the occasion when we learnt that it had taken sixty men, armed to the teeth, to obtain a battery from two defenceless women.

\* \* \* \* \*

The F——s to tea next day, plunged in gloom : worn and grey and without hope. I did my best to cheer them by saying that a settlement seemed to be in sight.

"Ah, *then*," I was told, "the real trouble will begin." Later—"It is the end of us all," they said.

"Well," I remarked cheerfully, "the end of us is not the end of the world, nor yet the end of Ireland."

Obviously they did not agree. Like the rest of one's class in Ireland, for years they had been furiously antagonistic to everything Irish. The Gaelic League was the first object of their denunciation. So much so, that to belong to it was to become a social outcast.



Without any sense of art or literature themselves, absorbed in the narrow round of lives devoted to agriculture and horse-breeding, hunting and racing, that Ireland should aspire to literary achievements filled them with scorn and derision.

"What is wanted in this country," one heard announced times without number, "is law and order and common sense, not poets, but people who will spray their potatoes and cut their hay before it rots."

The Abbey Theatre, which, through some unfortunate mistake, omitted to close its doors on the night of King Edward's funeral, and which they described in consequence as "a sink of disloyalty," was the next object of contempt. The new dramatic movement, which a few years ago was transforming Dublin from a place of cobwebby decay into a hive of artistic activity, excited their indignation. If they had had their way they would have suppressed it by force. The mere fact that anyone should find, in Irish myth or legend, material for poetry or drama reduced the gentlemen of Ireland to derision. From the Provost of Trinity down, everybody mocked. The poetry of Yeats, at the summit of his genius, entrancing Europe with the beauty of his lyrics, was described (by the few who had heard of it) as "balderdash," Synge's plays as "nothing but bad language and blasphemy."

A professor from Harvard once came to call on me, with an introduction from a London publisher. I was out when he arrived. He was shown into my "den," where I found him, some minutes later, transfixed, in front of my bookshelves.

"I have been three months in Ireland," he said, "and have been in every house of importance

in the country. This is the first one in which I have found a copy of Yeats's poetry. Do you read it?"

I showed him my collected editions of both Yeats and Synge's works, and assured him I had read everything they had written.

"Amazing," he replied. "You are the only person I have met outside Dublin who has even heard of them; and even in Dublin, Professor Mahaffy—who, by the way, assured me that it was mere waste of time studying Gaelic manuscripts—did nothing but jeer at both Synge and Yeats."

"If you have been three months in this country," I replied, "you must by this time surely have realized that Trinity College is the last place to recognize Irish genius. Indeed, of one of the most celebrated of her sons, the only thing that is recorded in Dublin is that he was once supposed to have cheated in a bicycle race. In Ireland, nobody can hope to achieve fame, except as a grower of potatoes or as the owner, or trainer, of a race-horse."

As I was entertaining the F——s, my thoughts reverted to the American professor, and to the astonishment he had expressed on the subject of Unionist Ireland.

For the F——s are typical of their class; of the age about to end: a class which thought itself the backbone of the country and flattered itself on its "understanding" of the people, and on the people's appreciation of it. And suddenly the people turned, and would have none of it. Sinn Féin, Bolshevism, call it what you will: day by day the line of cleavage between the two classes was growing more marked. Among the old, a measure of respect, and even friendship, still

obtained. But from the young, the slouching youth which props itself against the hedge, and is to be seen spitting from the parapet of every bridge into the river below, instead of greeting and cap-touchings, averted glances, if not actually hostile looks. Completely gone between them was any feeling of friendship ; going, almost gone, every trace of the good manners for which the Irish peasant was once famed.

And for all these changes, the Unionists are not themselves blameless. For never did they show any sympathy with those of their countrymen who were struggling to develop the soul of Ireland ; never did they display any imagination where the aspirations of their own country were concerned. Instead, invariably, they clung to England. And England, always encouraging them in the belief that she was standing by them, gradually let them down. One by one, events came creeping on, depriving them of their power. Mr. Wyndham, it was true, was thrown to the wolves ; but his Act remained. The land kept passing to the people. Gladstone died, and Parnell was broken, but Home Rule came marching on. Redmond went, and Sinn Fein arose in fire and murder, but the Irish landlords, more fiercely anti-Irish than ever, continued to cling to a Union which was already doomed, and to call for help to England, who never had any use for them except as election cries.

It is, perhaps, not altogether their fault, but rather the malign fate which sent them, so ill-equipped, into a country where such impossible difficulties exist.

For nowhere else in Europe do such problems prevail as in Ireland, where the classes and the masses belong to a different race and a different

religion. In these circumstances, or perhaps because of them, it is inevitable that in political outlook they should also differ.

Here and there, younger members of the "landed" classes, some Catholic and even more Protestant, identified themselves with the National movements; but, on the whole, the outlook on life of the descendants of the Cromwellian troopers remains very much to-day what it must have been in the days of the Protector, "Oh, for another Cromwell!" being, indeed, the favourite war-cry, at that time, of the anti-Irish, Protestant, Unionist "Die-hards." Having lived in Ireland all their lives, they claimed to speak with intimate knowledge of the land of their birth. On sympathy and understanding they wisely did not insist.

But since Ireland is a land of contradictions, however low their estimate of their fellow-countrymen, it is doubtful if they ever despised them quite as much as they despised the British Government, which, in complete disregard of their warnings, proceeded to deliver Ireland into the hands of the Irish. Abusing their own land on every possible occasion, in no circumstances did they ever want to live anywhere else. For Ireland, although she has never unveiled herself to them, has cradled them and, unconsciously, has wrapped them in her spell.

\* \* \* \* \*

Six weeks of cloudless blue, without a drop of rain—a record for Kerry.

M——, who had been demobilized and was out of a job, arrived on a visit. He said he had come to "protect" us—God help him!—an ex-officer of the British Army in the house being quite the surest possible invitation for trouble. Having thrown his revolver into the Lake, buried his field-

glasses in the garden and hidden his uniform between the mattresses in a spare bed, we began to feel easier in our minds about his presence in our midst.

As it happened, we were only just in time : for we had another raid. On this occasion we were all in bed. I had just awakened, with a start, out of my first sleep, when I heard the noise of many feet outside. I sat up, and the next minute L—— came into my room.

"There are men knocking at the door," she said.

"Let them knock," I replied. I dislike having my sleep disturbed, and my temper is never at its best in the early hours of the morning. A deafening succession of bangs on the door followed. I got up, put on a dressing-gown, and followed L—— to the landing window. Several men were standing in front of the house.

"What do you want?" I inquired.

"Have you any glasses?"

"What sort of glasses?"

"Telescope or spy-glasses."

"No."

"Are you sure?"

"Quite."

"Well, we have to search the house. You'll have to open the door."

I refused indignantly.

"Do you know who we are?"

I replied not very politely, to the effect that I neither knew nor cared.

"We're the I.R.A." (Irish Republican Army.)

Obviously I was meant to be impressed, if not to shriek and fall terror-stricken on my knees.

Instead of which, I merely asked why they didn't come in the daytime.

"Because it's not convenient."

"You mean because you're afraid to!" I suggested.

"That's exactly it," was the unexpected admission.

Eventually, after the exchange of further compliments and threats, we went down and opened the hall door. Six men in uniform of sorts, with Colonial hats, carrying rifles and revolvers, clattered in. L—, in a diaphanous dressing-gown, her hair in plaits tied up with red ribbon, advancing with a silver candlestick, conducted them to the drawing-room, where they remained, absorbed in the contemplation of a case of miniatures. Being much too wrathful at such an intrusion to take any interest in the investigation of my belongings, I remained in the hall. Suddenly I remembered M—. If he appeared on the scene there surely would be murder. I flew upstairs, opened the door of his room, heard snores and heavy breathing, and returned, relieved, downstairs. The raiders by this time were in the dining-room, investigating the knives in the sideboard drawer. I seated myself on the stairs. They trooped out into the passage, examining the walls with manifest interest.

"Have you any military equipment?" the leader asked, halting in front of me.

"Is it likely?" I replied evasively, thinking of the "British warm" under the mattress in a spare bedroom. The answer appeared to be satisfactory, for, mercifully, he did not pursue the subject any further. What would they do next, I wondered. Would they go upstairs? At all costs I was determined to prevent that. Rising to my full height, armed with a silver candlestick, I stood on the lower stair. They were, I observed, very young. It was not unnatural to conclude that they were

also very shy. Young Irishmen always are. My attire was exceedingly scanty, my hair was hanging down my back. My bare feet were in pink satin slippers.

"Wouldn't you like to see our bedrooms?" I inquired in a voice of assumed sweetness.

The leader became suddenly bashful.

"No—no—not at all—not at all——" he stammered, overcome with confusion. "Come on, boys, come on," and the party clattered hastily past the stairs, back into the hall, and out by the front door, apologizing profusely, as they went, for having "disturbed" us; just as M——, brandishing his boot-trees, appeared at his bedroom door; while, from the back regions, maids, in varying degrees of excitement, began to assemble, and refused to return to bed until they had made tea, a rite which, in Ireland, is invariably celebrated in all moments of crisis.

As for our visitors, it seems they did not go far. A smell of tobacco wafted in at my window, and an occasional suppressed cough, leading me to conclude that an outpost had spent the rest of the night on the terrace beneath; while M——, attired in ancient khaki trousers, on his way to an early bathe in the lake, walked, next morning, into a sentry posted in the yard. Apparently my taunt had taken effect, for all day they hung about in the bushes and on the mountain above the road, appearing in force, wearing masks, at 5 p.m. at the Chutes, less than a quarter of a mile away; searching the house from cellar to attic, and so terrifying the driver of the weekly provision cart, who was at the door when they arrived, that he drew the corks of the bottles of stout he was in the act of delivering, and, pouring their contents down his throat, gathered up the reins and drove wildly

away, declaring that never again would he return to so dangerous a place.

At dusk we made a bonfire of M——'s uniform, replanted the field-glasses in a securer spot, and awaited developments. All night the tramp of feet marching on the road could be heard. Boat-loads of men came down the lake. Signals flashed from every mountain. Searchlights played on all the houses. Nobody slept.

Nothing happened.

Next day rumours of a truce filled the air.

\* \* \* \* \*

The truce having duly materialized, we all proceeded to weep on each other's necks, the (British) lion lying down with the (Irish) lamb, who, more serpent-like than lamb-like, promptly made use of it to gather up fresh force and material for the eventual renewal of the struggle.

On the seacoast, arms, it was said, were being landed.

In the dead of night, carts rattling suggestively could be heard going up the mountain road. Stories of prodigious armaments were whispered round. "The biggest gun the world has ever seen" had arrived in Glencar. "'Big Bertha,' no doubt, imported from Germany," I suggested, after what L—— calls one of my "incredulous silences."

My informant, however, had never heard of Big Bertha. "I couldn't say if it's from Germany it came," was the reply, "but they do be telling me a shell from it would reach to Killarney."

My only hope was that, on its way, it would not lay Carrantuohill flat.

One night, about ten o'clock, having heard the sound of sawing close to the house, M—— and I sallied forth. Down at the marshy end of the field



near the fir wood, we came upon a number of men cutting alders.

"What do you mean by coming here in the night and cutting down my trees?" I inquired of those who had not jumped over the fence at our approach.

"They're not your trees," replied an objectionable youth with a hatchet in his hand.

"If they are not mine," I replied, "they certainly are not yours, and you have no right to come here stealing them."

"We're not stealing," he shouted; "the trees aren't yours, they belong to Ireland."

Seeing the type of patriot I had to deal with, I addressed him a few remarks on Ireland, which M—— followed up with some further ones as to his particular place in it. The youth looked like murder, and probably would have indulged his yearning for it, had not two older men returned to the scene at that moment.

I addressed my remarks to them, while the youth passed his hand over the edge of his hatchet, sampling its sharpness. "This is a breach of the truce," I said, "and unless you all leave immediately I will report it to the *liaison* officer in Cork."

The men, several more of whom had now joined the party, held a consultation.

One of them came up.

"How much do you want for the trees?" he inquired.

"I wasn't thinking of selling them," I replied, "but if you want to buy them, you can come to the house in the morning and we can discuss the matter."

"Are you going to report us?"

"Unless you go away at once, I certainly will."

They gathered up their saws and their hatchets,

jumped over the fence and disappeared in the darkness of the wood.

We waited for some time, close by the field, to see if their departure was genuine ; then wandered back to the house, where we found L—— on the verge of starting with a lantern in search of our mutilated remains.

“What in the world can they want those rotten alders for?” I asked.

“Gunpowder,” said M——, “is made from them.”

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Several weeks passed ; affairs remained for some time still in the balance ; nobody seemed particularly hopeful of a successful settlement. Breaches of the truce continued to recur, in spite of the efforts of the Republican leaders to put them down. Only on one other occasion, however, were we disturbed by the knocking at the door after dark, which all Ireland had learnt to dread, but which, in the last month, one had almost forgotten to think about.

A party of men handed in the following note :

OGLAIG NA H-EIREANN,

HEADQUARTERS,

KERRY NO. 2 BRIGADE.

“I would feel so grateful if you were so kind as to give me some apples for some of our war-worn troops, who are now on a holiday.”

O/C.

Equally war-worn, I, too, set out the following week on a holiday—to Italy.

## CHAPTER XVIII

A JOURNEY—POLITICS AND EGGS—A VISITOR—ELECTIONS—THE CIVIL WAR—MORE RAIDS

I RETURNED the following year. I can't think why. The situation had in no way improved. On the contrary, the Civil War which had broken out after the split over the Treaty was, if anything, rather worse than the Black and Tan War.

My journey was considerably complicated by the fact that, the railway line having been torn up between Dundrum and Limerick Junction, the train from Dublin to Mallow had in consequence to make a circular tour of Ireland. As it crawled on its irresolute way, on a track as apparently as unknown to the engine-driver as it was to myself (incidentally the only first-class passenger), the Great Southern and Western Railway seemed to me the emblem of Ireland's despair in the war to end Freedom.

For months the subject of unceasing attacks by raiders, robbers and murderers, with the possibility, round every corner, of an ambush or obstruction of some kind devised by "patriots" bent on bringing their country to economic ruin and bankruptcy, there was little certainty of anything in a journey by this line at that time than the missing of any and every connection, varied with the possibility of losing one's luggage, if not one's life.

Meanwhile, as we crawled along in the dusk,

there was ample time for studying the psychology of the wayside stations at which we halted, presumably for the purpose of enabling the stationmaster to study the contents of the *Cork Examiner*, borrowed from the guard.

It was raining, and the prevailing dampness lent to the platforms by which we lingered an air of bleakness and desolation which seemed to envelope in an atmosphere of decay the more or less inanimate car-driver, with red hair and battered hat, propped against the railings of the exit gate, the flapper, with shapeless legs, gazing into space against the booking-office door.

Almost, I felt, I could understand the spirit which planned an ambush or a raid in a station like Rathmore, producing, as it does, the feeling that nothing, by any possibility, could ever happen to it or in it.

Once upon a time, many years ago, I persuaded, with considerable difficulty, an English cook to come with me to Kerry. She made innumerable objections, one of them being that her mother would not hear of her "going abroad." Eventually, however, she consented.

On the Rosslare boat, when she emerged, paler even than the dawn which broke after a tempestuous night, I saw that, manifestly, she was regretting her decision.

At Mallow, where I always feel that Dante's warning "Abandon hope, all ye who enter here," should be suspended above the clock, which records the passing of time but not any corresponding passing of trains, it was obvious her mind was made up.

At Rathmore she came to the carriage window and gave me notice.

I could not blame her. For anyone who does

not know what lies beyond, in the shape of Farranfore, might well be pardoned for thinking themselves, at Rathmore, at the end of the unknown.

But Farranfore is worse. Bleaker and wetter, exposed to every blast of heaven ; being a junction it has more railway lines, leading to even remoter regions. There are never any porters and seldom any passengers. A refreshment room, containing mouldy biscuits and watery tea, adds mockery unknown in any other Kerry station.

Beyond the confines of the platform are no signs of human habitation. Melancholy fields stretch in empty Nothingness. What happens to people stranded for the night I dare not think. There is no hotel, no public-house, not even a car-driver of bleary aspect to lend encouragement to the belief that, somewhere in space, a refuge for travellers may yet exist.

How and why Farranfore ever arose as a junction is a mystery which may be known to the directors—there is said to be one for every eleven miles of the line—but will never be solved by any traveller on the Great Southern and Western Railway, for whose spiritual consolation I would suggest the framing, in every compartment, of R. L. Stevenson's appropriate maxim to the effect that "it is better to travel hopefully than to arrive."

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In Kerry, the state of the political situation can always be gauged by the price of eggs. In June they went down to eight shillings per hundred, by which we inferred that the hopes of the London Conference, which, a fortnight before, had sent them up to ten and sixpence, had been dashed to the ground.

It was the same in the Great War, only then eggs

went up and up, whereas, in the Irish War, they went down and down.

All over the west of Ireland are innumerable little farms, varying in size from five to twenty acres, on which life is eked out painfully and precariously by the sale of agricultural produce: the financial destiny of the owners being determined by the prices prevailing on market and fair days. For months there were no buyers. With the holding up of trains, the burning and looting of wagons, trade came to a standstill. When the Provisional Government and the Republicans came to terms, the buyers reappeared. Cattle went up £2 to £3 a head, eggs half a crown a hundred. Farmers, whose bullocks and heifers had been on the verge of dying from lack of food, jubilated. Hens picking around in search of sustenance were heartened by fistfuls of oats flung at them, to encourage them in the laying of eggs which, at a figure known as "pence apiece," might once more be worth producing. With each of Michael Collins' journeys across the water the price fell another sixpence, until they were back again at eight shillings. Despair reigned once more.

Every day the hopelessness of the situation, the impossibility of political agreement, became more apparent. Endless conferences took place, mysterious "pacts" and "agreements" were come to, with the result that Mr. Arthur Griffiths encouragingly remarked that we were back where we were the previous December.

Living, as one did, in the toppling ruins of what, a few years ago, was a prosperous country, one could not help feeling amazement at the credulity of the people. Driven off their lands and farms, robbed of their money by local bandits, cheated by profiteers; with pigs and cattle down to nothing,

while the food they bought remained at war prices ; duped and doped by promises of fabulous prosperity to come, they accepted, apparently without complaining, a situation bringing them every day nearer to bankruptcy. For in Ireland, the politician, like the priest, lives on promises of a problematical hereafter. The priest, unable to solve the mysteries of existence in this world, preaches the joys of the next : the politician, incapable of making life possible for the masses under one Government, proclaims the wonderful advantages to be obtained under another, leading the people to believe that, under a Republic, there would be no taxes and no unemployment, that the land would be divided between everybody, that mines full of gold and silver would be opened up in the mountains, and that everybody would have a pension and would be rich, happy and free. If it had not been pathetic it would have been absurd. But the disillusionment to come, one felt, would be no laughing matter. Already distant mutterings might be heard. "Is this the freedom we have fought and bled for?" being asked by members of the I.R.A., held up at the point of the revolver by others belonging to a later offshoot of the same service. "What are we getting out of it?" being another ominous question which was heard even more frequently as the ineptitude of the politicians became more manifest.

Meanwhile, like the Kingdom of Heaven, which we all hope to achieve (at some future and indefinite date), Ireland lived on in hopeful expectation of a Republic. That, under it, the situation might become even more chaotic was an eventuality which must, however, have been suspected in secret by the most ardent supporters of the movement. At the station one day, the confusion being more

than usually apparent owing to the 4.20 train having forgotten to stop and the 5.40 being, in consequence, unable to start, the indignation of a local patriot, who found himself stranded five miles from a public-house, was at any rate illuminating.

"Glory be to God," he shouted to the helpless officials assembled on the platform, "what's happened to yez at all—is the Republic upon us, that ye're all so bemoidered?"

Like the fowls of the air, we carried on from day to day, taking no thought for the morrow, hesitating to sow when none could foretell who would reap or gather into barns the seed they had sown. Existing on the sufferance of our neighbours, we were sufficiently grateful to them and to Providence if, on waking in the morning, we found ourselves in our own bed and under our own roof. For as things were, if you were unfortunate enough to displease your neighbour, or if he happened to want your house, or your land, or your shop for himself, he would take it from you. You could not prevent him, for he was armed and you were not. He had only to take possession and you would find yourself, with your flocks and your herds, on the hard high-road, with no redress, since there was no law and no government in the land.

Mr. Blennerhassett, a large landowner near Tralee, who was kidnapped, was motored one night to some distant region where, at the point of the revolver, he was compelled to sign away some forty acres of his land.

The Magills, two girls living alone, were attacked, shots fired for over an hour round the house, and their cattle driven off. In the dead of night innumerable motors were forcibly removed by armed men. Bicycling along the road, women and girls were held up and compelled to complete their



journey on foot, while their attackers rode away on their machines. At Quarter Sessions in Killarney one day, an armed man entered the Court in the middle of its transactions and announced that he would allow no civil cases to be proceeded with, whereupon the Judge was compelled to close the Court.

Yet Kerry remained comparatively quiet. In other parts things were very much worse. Not a day passed without the robbery of a Bank, the seizing of a factory, the burning or looting of some helpless person's property. When redress or protection was sought at Headquarters, the I.R.A., while expressing sympathy, admitted complete helplessness in establishing law and order under existing conditions.

Whether we might expect any improvement in the next five or the next five hundred years was a matter of opinion. Personally, I was inclined to think that by the time Dail Eireann had wearied of the personal recrimination for the purpose of which its members apparently assembled together, the next European war would be upon us. In view of that approaching catastrophe nothing that happened in Ireland could by comparison be of very much consequence.

\* \* \* \* \*

Our only visitor for nearly a month was a beggar woman. When I asked her where she lived :

"I declare to goodness, I don't live anywhere," she replied. "I do be staying around with different people and it's very troublesome, for you have to be complimenting them all the time you'd be in their house."

Recollections of week-end parties and their incidental "complimenting" enlisted my sym-

pathy to the extent of half a crown and an old skirt, which brought a shower of blessings and the wish that I might "walk in silk and satin" all my days.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the Elections held in June, the country showed itself generally pro-Treaty, the "Women and Childers" party, headed by Erskine Childers, going down, Mrs. O'Callaghan, widow of the murdered Mayor of Limerick, and the interminable Mary McSwiney, remaining the only representatives of their sex.

In Kerry, where bullets are generally considered a more efficacious method than votes for deciding political issues, there were no elections, nobody feeling sufficiently optimistic to oppose the Republican candidates. As to the Constitution issued to the public, it was obvious it would not commend itself to the extremists on account of the oath, and because, while actually bestowing complete independence on Ireland, it appeared to give powers to the King which, in reality, he would not possess.

If not meant to be taken seriously, as we are told is the case in Canada, then it is unfortunate that these clauses should have been inserted in the Treaty, where their wording was bound to arouse the suspicions of Ireland. As it was, Mr. de Valera and his friends loudly declared that Ireland's "slave Parliament" would not be free to make her own laws, and, among the popular convictions in these parts was that, under the Treaty, "Irish soldiers would have to fight in English wars."

No sooner were the Elections over than fighting started in Dublin, the Rory O'Connorites in the Four Courts being besieged by Free State troops. Most of the casualties were civilians who, in Dublin, always take an interested part in their country's

battles and generally appear to stop the bullets of both belligerent parties.

The railway lines were, of course, again torn up ; once more we found ourselves without letters or Dublin newspapers. The washerwoman, however, arrived one morning with the news that the "Four Walls" of Dublin were down, so we concluded that the Battle of the Four Courts was over. Incidentally she seemed impressed by the fact that the priest had given up praying for de Valera, and apologized for the cow having eaten my stockings as they were drying on the hedge.

In the evening came the *Cork Examiner*, our only link with the outer world, confirming the news of the surrender of the garrison of the Four Courts and containing a statement of the Republican Army position, from which it could only be assumed that fighting was to be general all over the country. In fact, in Kerry it had already begun. Listowel, the Headquarters of the Free State, had been captured. Killorglin was preparing its defences with sandbags and flour sacks. "Wind up" all round. Dan said he would probably "have to go." An ardent Republican, and conceiving it his duty to wave the flaming torch of patriotism, obviously he could not altogether reconcile himself to leaving the tomato house, at that moment at a critical stage of its development. With all the other youth of the country he had been "called up." The general feeling, however, seemed to be one of hesitation. "They broke their faith with us in Dublin," he said, "we might as well break ours now."

Somehow I felt I should not lose Dan. As I was told he was "very high up in the I.R.A." I hoped his example might be followed by those under his command in the garden. I would have given a

good deal to know his exact position in the Republican Army, but so intense was the discretion observed by all parties that I was never likely to be told. Sometimes when I heard him issuing orders about the manure to his subordinates, I detected the authoritative tones of a Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel ; at other moments when I met him trundling the wheel-barrow, I would have taken him for a recently promoted Lance-Corporal, had it not been for the fact that practically everybody in the I.R.A. at that time was an officer. Indeed, it was reported that, at an inspection, the Divisional General was heard to inquire : “ Where is *the Private* of this Battalion ? ”

With so many armies to choose from, and the practical certainty of achieving in any of them the rank of Major-General before the age of thirty, no man in Ireland should have been without the means of subsistence. No qualification save that of enterprise seemed necessary. Of a distinguished Commandant in one Army it was openly asserted that he was dismissed for robbing a Bank—while Mrs. M——, who wrote to tell the sweep to call, received the following reply : “ Brigadier-General Murphy is sorry he can’t clean your chimneys as his military duties keep him too busy, but his son, Colonel Commandant Padraic Murphy, will call to do them on Tuesday morning.”

\* \* \* \* \*

Accounts of “ desperate ” battles and bombardments continued to arrive from all parts of the country : the surprising thing about such terrific fighting being the absence, in nearly every case, of a single casualty. Unlike the Gael of old, who “ went into battle and always fell,” the modern Irishman seems capable of taking part in a hundred

battles and never falling. Another novelty was the introduction of a priest who, at the most intense moment of the hostilities, invariably got up and made a speech ; while even in Dublin, where the fighting was on a more serious scale, enterprising Press men drove, through machine-gun fire, in jaunting cars down the principal battle thoroughfares. It was all very remarkable, but when I commented upon it to Dan he explained it.

“They don’t want to hurt anyone,” he said ; “they’re not like the Black and Tans, killing all before them.”

If one could have felt any confidence in the future of Ireland one might have endured with greater equanimity her distressing imbecilities. Out of Russia in her elemental agony one felt that eventually something great might evolve. Nations, like individuals, cannot be brought forth without birth-pangs and sufferings.

Nothing begins and nothing ends  
That is not paid with moan,  
For we are born in each other’s pain  
And perish in our own.

The sadness of so many of us then was caused by the feeling that there was so little sense in the upheaval, that all the destruction was sheer waste—the inevitable outcome, perhaps, of a struggle in a country where romantic lies are preferred to established facts and where a poetic past is taken more seriously than present actualities.

Meanwhile the sense of political calamity seemed to spread to the earth and sky ; a great blight settled on the land. An iceberg was reported off the Blaskets and, like the Russian soldiers in Scotland at the beginning of the War, who were seen by “a friend of a friend,” was solemnly believed in.

Some unusual explanation was certainly required for the arctic conditions, more suited to the summit of Mount Everest than to Kerry at midsummer. In July the leaves had begun to fall. Sporadic efforts to cut the hay resulted in sopping wisps blowing about the dripping fields. Nothing grew. In the flagged garden the antirrhinums refused to sit up, to add even an inch to their stunted stature. Nothing ripened. The gooseberries were hard as bullets, the peaches small and green, while plums and pears, of which spring gave unusual promise, dropped in disgust off the trees after the hails of May.

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An invitation typical of the times in which we lived came in August. "Do come to us for a few days," wrote G—— in Co. Waterford. "If you hurry up you may be in time for a battle. The bridges are all blown up and the roads mined, but even if they do by any chance go off, I'm told they wouldn't blow the hat off your head."

The post usually consisted of a souvenir of *The Times*, in the shape of an empty newspaper wrapper with "found without contents in raided mail" inscribed on it. All the telegraph wires were cut. Every motor in the country was taken. One evening L—— and I, returning in her Rolls-Royce from a day's golf, found, drawn up at the front door, a Ford car containing four men, one of whom got out and came up to us.

"We have orders to take your car," he said.

For a time L—— protested. The other three got out of the Ford and stood around.

"If you will not give it, we have orders to take it by force," said the Brigand-in-chief, whom I recognized as the brother of a housemaid I had had some years' ago, producing a typewritten document

which he handed to L——. The Second in Command, who had been biting his nails in the background, advanced towards the car. A revolver fell ostentatiously out of his pocket. He stooped and picked it up.

"Do you really think you're doing yourselves or Ireland any good by doing this sort of thing?" I asked him. He scowled.

"Anyway, we're risking our lives doing it," he replied.

"Risking your lives," I exclaimed in astonishment, "when you never go anywhere except to unarmed people! You wouldn't come here if you thought there was anyone with a gun in the place."

He retired behind the car.

L—— came in. We shut the door.

The car was driven away.

All over the country, in our stolen motors, the Republicans careered wildly round: looting towns and villages for food and clothing, terrifying the unfortunate shopkeepers left with nothing to sustain them but the hope of eventual revenge, "We'll roast him alive in his house when he comes home" being perhaps the warmest feeling of welcome awaiting the eventual return of the demobilized Republican. Roasted alive or found dead in a bog, whatever his eventual fate, it would not, one felt, be enviable.

For a time an unarmed, unorganized community may be bludgeoned into apparent acquiescence by a few reckless desperadoes with revolvers—but only for a time. Sooner or later the day of reckoning must come. The mills of God grind slow but they grind exceedingly small, and most of those who, against the wishes of the many, brought destruction on Ireland were themselves eventually destroyed.

Meanwhile one was inclined to agree with Swift that “ it is no dishonour to submit to the lion, but who, with the figure of a man, can think with patience of being devoured alive by a rat ? ”

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With the waning of summer, the process known as “ waking up ” was applied with still greater force in Kerry. In addition to motors, horses and traps were seized. Many of the shops and factories, having been looted, closed down. Hundreds of people were in consequence thrown out of employment. Cattle and pigs were a drug on the market, while farmers, both large and small, were faced with destitution.

The mails were raided again and again. The only newspaper allowed to come through was the *Cork Examiner*, which, having been seized by the Republicans, contained extravagant accounts of successes over the Free State troops, in which not a single casualty ever appeared to occur in the Republican ranks, the following being a typical example of the wild exaggeration with which all such achievements were coloured.

#### LIMERICK SITUATION

The gallant Volunteers of the Limerick Brigades, with their comrades from Cork and Kerry who all fought with such conspicuous bravery, against vastly greater numbers, in Limerick, since the peace agreement there was treacherously broken by the Free State Officers, have now skilfully withdrawn to the outskirts of the city. The Strand and Castle Barracks were blown to ruins by the British artillery used by the Free State forces, but their heroic garrisons, when only crumbling walls remained to defend, retreated with daring courage through the enemy lines without suffering any casualties. The enemy shells bursting on inflammable materials caused several fires, resulting in the destruction of a considerable amount of property of the civilian population.

Two attempts by the Free State forces to advance towards



Bruff were repulsed by the Republican forces, and the enemy was forced to retreat.

On the hills near Lough Gur, about three miles on the Limerick side of Bruff, two small columns of Free State troops fired on each other by mistake, with the result that one of their number was killed and six wounded.

In a most daring attack on Bruff Free State Barracks our men fought their way to posts in close proximity to the outside walls. Fearlessly they charged over this fortification right up to the Barrack, led by their dashing Commandant. As the third Republican jumped the wall a bullet from the defenders struck the magazine of his rifle, exploding the firing caps of all the bullets, and knocking the rifle out of his hand, but he escaped uninjured. His comrades stuck their rifles into the loop-holes to fire into the barracks, but anticipating the attack, the garrison had these effectively plugged from the inside. Threatened with bombs from the upper windows, and by enemy reinforcements and armoured cars from a neighbouring military station, our forces returned to their posts. In the attack one of our men was wounded. Free State casualties unknown. Our men are displaying admirable spirit, untiring courage and wonderful resource.

### HEROIC DEFENCE OF WATERFORD CITY

The Waterford Brigade, supported by a Column from Cork, met the enemy attack with marvellous determination. At 3 p.m. on the 20th inst., enemy forces attacked our troops in Manor Street, and Lady Lane I.R.A. Barracks. After severe fighting they succeeded in capturing the Manor Street position, but all our men got clear away. About the same time a strong force of enemy troops attacked our outpost at the Adelphi Hotel, several enemy machine-guns blazing forth their deadly hail of lead. The intensity of fire smashed in the defences, and eventually the garrison was cut off, and the position was taken after a desperate conflict lasting nearly two hours. Ten of our men were captured here, and a section of Red Cross men.

At 4 p.m. on the same date the Free State troops sent an ultimatum to our troops in the P.O. demanding the surrender of that building and threatening in the event of refusal to shell that position. "No surrender" being the reply, the enemy opened fire with 7 machine guns and an 18-pounder. At 6 o'clock the post had been reduced to ruins, so our men evacuated it, losing one prisoner and one man wounded.

The troops evacuating the P.O. reinforced the garrison in Granville Hotel, and in Bolger's, Broad Street. Immediately following the destruction of the P.O. the enemy shelled the Granville Hotel, and when the building had been practically wrecked the defenders successfully made their way to reinforce other posts without any casualties.

Shell fire was opened on the gaol about 4 p.m. and continued intermittently until about 6 o'clock. After the capture of the Granville the bombardment of this post continued until about 9.30 p.m., when it ceased for the night.

On 21st at 5.30 a.m., the enemy opened heavy rifle and machine-gun fire on our positions in the gaol and Barrack Street area. At 7 a.m. shells again burst on the gaol, and continued so for over an hour. Our troops replied with rifle and machine-gun fire. Sniping operations continued until noon, when fierce fighting developed in the vicinity of the gaol and Barrack Street, and then the artillery crashed forth its crashing missiles and heavy projectiles with such intensity that the gaol was almost a complete wreck, but the brave garrison refused to surrender, and fought a retirement to the outskirts of the city.

Sniping operations continue at various points in the city.

Flying columns from the 1st S.D. and reinforcements from Tipperary marching to the relief of Waterford exchanged shots with the enemy rearguard just as they entered the city.

The O.C. Free State forces (Brigadier Daly) had practically all the Red Cross drivers arrested, and wrongfully accused them of supplying the fighting troops. He also ordered the Republican first-aid men off the streets, threatening to fire on them if they did not obey the order.

Although subjected to machine-gun fire, four of our men repeatedly repelled attempts by the enemy to cross the Suir in boats at Maybridge. The work of the Cumann-na-mBan and the Fianna Scouts is worthy of the greatest praise, and all ranks fought with splendid gallantry and daring against overwhelming forces, heavy artillery and endless supplies of armaments.

The Tipperary columns are operating successfully in cutting enemy communications, and repelling enemy attacks on their respective areas.

#### LATEST REPORT FROM LIMERICK AREA

At 4.30 this morning a party of Republican troops with an armoured car encountered a party of Free State troops

advancing towards Kilmallock. After a short engagement the enemy retreated, leaving two armed prisoners in the hands of the Republicans.

On Sunday morning at 7.30 a.m. one of our columns engaged a party of Free State troops on the road between Bruree and Kilmallock. After a sharp fight the Free State forces retreated, leaving one dead. Two armed prisoners were captured by our troops.

The same column entered another house near by and captured five armed Free State troops, who did not put up a fight. The total figures in these engagements were: 10 rifles, 620 rounds .303, 2 revolvers and 30 rounds .45. There were nine prisoners taken and one Free Stater shot dead.

At 2 p.m. to-day our troops were informed that there was a Column of Free State forces between Kilmallock and Charleville. A party of 25 Republicans set out in a lorry accompanied by an armoured car and went towards Kilmallock to meet them.

At 3.30 our forces came up with them near Thomastown. Our men dismounted and took up positions. The Free State troops retreated to a farmer's house on the roadside. While awaiting reinforcements, our men kept up an intermittent fire, not being then strong enough to attack, as the seven Free State troops did not enter the farmhouse but engaged our column before they were forced to retreat to the house.

At 8 p.m. a further column of 21 men reinforced our troops. The armoured car played machine-gun fire on the house, which we also attacked with bombs, and at 9 p.m. the enemy were forced to surrender; 26 prisoners, 26 rifles, 2 revolvers, and a quantity of ammunition fell into our hands. We found that one of the enemy (O'Mahony, Blarney Street, Cork) had been killed, and that M. O'Brien, who was in charge of a Free State party, was severely wounded. We recovered a prisoner of ours who had been captured earlier in the day, and the situation is well in hand.

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## CHAPTER XIX

### TERRIBLE TIMES

WHENEVER two people met :

“Terrible times,” said one.

“Indeed and they are,” said the other : a greeting which quite took the place of time-honoured remarks on the weather, and which expressed your appreciation of the seriousness of the situation without committing you to sympathy with either side. When the W——s were raided, Mrs. W—— was placed in a chair with a member of the I.R.A. standing over her holding a revolver at her head. After a prolonged silence, which was Mrs. W——’s dignified method of expressing her resentment, the youth, who was obviously embarrassed, waving the revolver in the air, soothingly exclaimed : “Terrible times, Mrs. W——, terrible times !”

While everybody, in this remark, expressed their appreciation of the spirit of the age, nobody made the slightest effort to make them any less terrible. On the contrary, the attitude of the public in general only served to increase the terror. If the shopkeepers in the towns had banded themselves together and refused to deliver up their goods to the Republicans, the looting could have been stopped in a week. In the ordinary small southern town, ten to twenty men daily held up hundreds of inhabitants, who handed over to them everything they asked for without a protest. If anyone dared to utter a word of criticism of the actions of the

I.R.A., even behind their backs, they were immediately met with a terrified "Hush ! It's as much as your life is worth to say that." History in Ireland is largely a question of monotonous repetition, but in all its melancholy course it is doubtful if there was ever quite so discreditable a silence as that with which crime and outrage were met in 1922.

People were so terrified that they would submit to any loss or personal humiliation in order to save their lives. One of the few people who showed any independence of character in Kerry was the Protestant Dean of Ardfert, who was held up one day by two armed men and told to hand over his bicycle. "You may shoot me if you like," he replied, "but you shall not have my bicycle." He wasn't shot, but they hit him on the head. He fell on the road still clinging to his bicycle, which they kicked, but which remains to this day in his possession.

This was but an isolated instance. In the generality of cases, a sullen acceptance took the place of the determined resistance with which the situation might have been met, had the national backbone not been quite so invertebrate.

The whole character of Ireland deteriorated. Killing and stealing became no longer crimes. Fear, hate and suspicion took the place of the affection and friendliness which we all felt for each other a few years ago. "An ounce of fear is better than a ton of love," said a leading Republican, summing up the policy of his party : a policy so inherently false that it could only persist in a country where Christianity seemed to have momentarily perished.

"Even our prayers don't seem to be having much effect," Bridget the cook remarked gloomily.

one morning, "and the fasting and all we done and things no better."

"On the contrary," I replied, "worse than ever—try praying for courage by way of a change. Until Ireland stops shivering and shaking, like one of your jellies, at the sight of a revolver, nothing will ever be better."

"You wouldn't like to die," said Bridget.

"Personally," I remarked frigidly, "I'd rather be dead any day than alive in this country, the way things are to-day."

"Lord save us," said Bridget in accents of pious horror.

Mr. McCartie, who was kidnapped, described his experiences on returning.

Holding an important brief for the prosecution in a lawsuit due at Quarter Sessions in Killarney, the other side, in order that the case should not be proceeded with, had him removed in the dead of night by armed men and conveyed to "an unknown destination." Having been blindfolded, he had no idea where he was taken to, and was moved twice during the week of his detention. On each occasion he was confined in a small bedroom with darkened windows. Three times a day food was brought to him by a masked man. Each meal was a repetition of the last, and consisted of eggs, tea and bread and butter. He was offered drink, but, being a teetotaller, refused; and cigarettes were supplied whenever he asked for them. He had nothing to complain of in the matter of courtesy. Nobody ever had with the I.R.A. Apparently even when they murder you they do it with polite regret. When they burnt the A——'s house, the leader, who was one of their own gardeners, as he locked the family and servants into the stables, was heard admonishing his

followers : " Be careful, boys, don't be destroying the grass, her ladyship don't like it thrampled."

When Quarter Sessions were over, and the case in which Mr. McCartie was interested had been dismissed, owing to " the prosecution having failed to appear," he was returned to his family, by motor, blindfolded, in the dead of night.

Nothing had been said to him and he in turn had spoken to nobody.

\* \* \* \* \*

" Can I send a telegram to London ? " I inquired one day at the Post Office.

" Only as a parcel," was the astonishing reply. " The wires are cut to Cork, and the cross-Channel telegraph suspended, but it can go as a parcel to Fishguard and on, as a wire, from there to London."

" And how long will it take ? " I inquired.

" I couldn't say," replied the Postmistress, " I suppose about a week."

I bethought me of a parcel of groceries ordered a couple of months before from Dublin, which had not yet arrived, and decided not to send the wire.

We were living in such strange times, for all I knew the groceries might be travelling as a post card.

" The world is upside down," Mrs. Daly remarked when we discussed the situation. One of the regrets of my life was that Mrs. Daly lived so far away and that I saw her so seldom.

The evening and the morning being the twenty-first since we had seen a newspaper of any kind, even the *Cork Examiner* no longer reaching us, being bereft of trains, motor, horses and bicycles, I decided one morning that, if I had to walk all the way, I would call on Mrs. Daly, whose reflections on the state of the country would be sure to be illuminating.

Mrs. Daly, by the way, was Mrs. Daly no longer. The last year, so eventful in the history of Ireland, had also witnessed stirring events in her life. In October she buried her husband. The sad intelligence was conveyed to me by her eldest daughter, aged eleven, and was coupled with the request for a blanket. "Me mother said I was to tell you that me father died last week, and she do be feeling the cold very much and she hopes that God will prosper you and could you assist her with a blanket or some small help."

I had no time to pay Mrs. Daly a visit of condolence before going abroad. When, some time after my return in the spring, I was about to do so, I was electrified to hear that she had not only married again but had captured as her husband the match of the neighbourhood: a widower who, as a matter of fact, was courting a neighbour and a great friend of her own, when Mrs. Daly swooped down and, carrying him off to a priest, married him herself.

Toiling along the deserted road over the mountain and through the bog, I eventually arrived, weary and damp, at Mrs. Daly's. I congratulated her on her recent nuptials.

"I'm the best-dressed woman in the place now," she remarked with pride, "and I have a hat with a feather."

The cottage showed no trace of her newly acquired prosperity. The leak in the roof had extended to the walls, which were covered with moss, which seemed, indeed, to be growing even on the green faces of her tubercular children.

"Are you going on living here?" I inquired. "Hasn't your husband a farm of his own?"

"He have it sold," said Mrs. Daly, "and the way things are, better for him have the money he



got for it in the bank. This place is poor, but sure it's good enough till things is settled."

"When will that be?"

"The dear knows. Terrible times," Mrs. Daly sighed.

I made the appropriate rejoinder.

"If they don't settle soon among themselves the country will be destroyed altogether."

"I thought it was that already," I suggested.

"Indeed and it is. Ruined we all are."

"It's the fault of people like you," I remarked.

"How so?"

"It's your own boys who are doing it. Isn't Batty in the I.R.A.?"

We were quite alone in the cottage, which consisted of one room. Except for the children playing down the road no one was within several miles of us. But Mrs. Daly's voice sank instinctively to a whisper.

"Out every night, and not a word to his mother where he'd be going or if he'd ever be returning—and two of his fingers blown off."

"Fighting?"

"Not at all. Batty wouldn't like to be fighting. Making explosions he was. That much he told me."

I suppose my face expressed a certain nervous apprehension, for Mrs. Daly hastened to reassure me. I resumed my seat on ascertaining that there were no bombs concealed underneath it.

"Things is a fright," continued Mrs. Daly. "I suppose you heard tell of the battle in Tralee, hundreds dead and dying, and coffins going over the mountains for days."

"Nine men, I understand, were killed and two wounded in Tralee."

"And Kenmare blown to pieces by the English Navy," continued Mrs. Daly, completely regardless

of my correction. "Terrible work there and at Ballycartie, dead bodies lying out on both sides of the road."

"Turnips I thought it was," I remarked, "not corpses. McCarthy's field, I heard, was shelled, and his turnips blown up and scattered all over the place."

"The poor man," exclaimed Mrs. Daly, her sympathy temporarily diverted from the thought of the corpses to McCarthy's devastated crops; "he'll be ruined entirely."

"We're all ruined," I remarked despondently.

"You must be terribly knocked about without the motor-car."

"We are."

"Indeed then, it was a pity for them to have taken it. The priest preached about it on Sunday. A disgrace, he said it was, to be treating two such venerable ladies like that."

"Did he really say venerable?" I inquired faintly. My hair is not yet grey, and, though neither of us aspired to the athleticism of Mademoiselle Lenglen, both L—— and I could still skip about more or less actively on the tennis lawn. Somehow "venerable" hardly seemed the truthful description one might expect from the pulpit.

"He did then," replied Mrs. Daly. "Two of the most venerable ladies in the country, he said, and all you both done for the poor people and the motor lent to the sick and dying whenever it'd be wanted."

I breathed again, consoling myself with the thought that "venerated" had been the adjective by which we had been originally designated by the sympathetic priest.

"Common robbery, he said it was."

"So it was."

"They done it for Ireland," said Mrs. Daly.

"Disgracing Ireland, that's what they're doing," I ventured, regardless of the consequences that might result from my reckless criticism.

"They're risking their lives."

"Nonsense," I replied heatedly; "they take no risks. They never steal except from unarmed people."

"And the battles they're fighting!" shrieked Mrs. Daly.

"There are no battles," I replied, "only ambushes, bridges blown up, roads trenched, barracks burnt, houses sandbagged; but when Free State troops appear there is nobody to meet them, the Irregulars have all fled to the mountains. Cork and Killarney were taken without a shot being fired."

Batty might wreak Republican vengeance on me with his revolver if he liked. For once I intended to say what I thought.

"It's a terrible racket, anyway," said Mrs. Daly diplomatically, "and sure what's the sense of it all?" she added, changing her attitude with disconcerting suddenness. "Sure the English laws were the best we ever had, with butter at two-and-nine a pound and eggs at two pound a hundred. When'll we see the like of that again?"

"Never," I replied with conviction.

"Mad altogether they are," said Mrs. Daly, summing up the flower of the Irish Republic; adding, in a sepulchral whisper in my ear, as I rose to take my departure, "The Black and Tans were *angels* compared to them."

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Nothing amazed me more, in our astonishing war of independence, than that anybody should

be found, on either side, willing to die for such a damp and miserable land.

Day after day of driving mist and wailing wind wrapped me, like the skies, in impenetrable gloom. It might have been a particularly inclement December instead of the height of summer. There were no longer any seasons. Winter, spring and summer in that year of dismal happenings were all alike. Sometimes wind alone, sometimes rain; more often wind and rain together; as soon as one decreased, the other increased in intensity.

I envy people who are impervious to weather. They are not uncommon. In London once I knew a woman who was not even aware of a pea-soup fog—an event which to me blotted out not only all hopes of this world, but of the next. Day after day as I sat over the fire, hugged in complete misery of soul, I found myself anticipating a future, rapidly approaching, when nothing would remain for us all but to be trampled into the mud of Ireland. Meanwhile, the days wore themselves out with distressing monotony. If it were possible to die of boredom I should have done so.

It was no use pretending that life was interesting, because it wasn't. The interminable day began at the latest possible moment—by old time. In a country where there is no summer and time is of no account, my attitude has always been one of "no surrender" to legalized tampering with the clocks. For once I was in complete agreement with the Roman Catholic Church, which, in Kerry, has always set its authority against what is known as "Protestant time." Rather than conform to a ridiculous custom imported from across the water, I kept no time at all.

Something in the way of recording the passing of the hours obtained in the kitchen. A gong

sounded. Meals appeared at intervals, and helped to distinguish the day from the night. Otherwise there was nothing to disturb a silence and a darkness which had all the disadvantages, and none of the advantages, of Eternity.

For weeks we saw no one, went nowhere, heard nothing, did nothing worth recording. Every morning we wakened to the sound of the rain beating against the windows, the wind howling in the chimneys. Between breakfast and lunch I made a pretence of being busy. From lunch till tea I abandoned the effort, staring blankly out of the windows at the lake glooming under the leaden sky, smoked cigarettes, listened to the ticking of the clock, gazed prophetically into the future, seeing myself, at the end of time, sitting crumpled in a chair, like my grandmother-in-law whom I found on her ninetieth birthday dissolved in tears.

"Whatever is the matter, Granny?" I inquired.

"My dear," she replied despairingly, "I am so depressed. I feel I have nothing to live for."

After tea I began to understand why people take to drink. Lighting another cigarette, I would make a prodigious effort and paddle in a mackintosh round the dilapidated garden, picking sweet-pea and unripe fruit, vaguely wondering how even these had survived, in addition to the summer we had had, the onslaughts of the rabbits and the squirrels, the slugs and the birds which had made the garden their permanent habitation.

Wet, and rather more depressed than when I went out, I came in. Although too stuffy for a fire, it was too chilly to be without one. Having exchanged my damp garments for a tea-gown, I sank, with several books, on to a sofa. None of them, however, could rouse me out of the profound

dejection which lasted from dinner till the moment when I finally collapsed between the sheets of my welcoming bed.

Day in, day out, nothing happened.

Was there ever so boring a war, without any longer even the rumour of a battle to thrill us into unbelieving excitement? For even the rumours came to an end.

For weeks the countryside had regaled itself with blood-curdling tales of dead and dying: "Mick" was killed, "Tim" had lost a leg, and "Pat" had had his face blown off, while de Valera had been buried (several times); but gradually, as "Mick" and "Tim" turned up unscathed and on "Pat's" face not even the trace of a scratch could be discovered, the list of casualties diminished and finally disappeared, while de Valera, alive or dead, was no longer mentioned.

"There'll be great fighting yet," said Dan hopefully.

Meanwhile the bloodless war of raids and kidnapping, of looting and destruction to roads and railways, dragged on. In Tralee a gang of workers set out on a breakdown engine to mend the line. Immediately they were surrounded by armed Republicans, who seized the engine and, after chalking "Go and be damned" in large letters on it, started it and sent it at full speed into Tralee, where a signalman fortunately managed to divert it into a siding, where it hurled itself into some coal-trucks which it ground to powder.

After blowing up the Barracks in Killorglin—a process which seems to have been successfully carried out without dislodging the jackdaws from the chimneys—the Irregulars, with rifles and bundles of loot, trekked in stolen motors, on stolen horses and bicycles, to the mountains, two days

before the arrival of the National troops ; leaving behind them a trail of wanton destruction in the shape of blown-up bridges, damaged roads, railways and telegraph wires—an ignoble flight grandiloquently described as an “evacuation.” Soon, one felt, there would be nothing left in Ireland to destroy, while the bill for damages, mounting up and up, must land the country in eventual bankruptcy and so realize the dream of de Valera, who is said to have announced that, if he could not rule Ireland, he would ruin it.

For several Sundays the priest denounced our local Republicans as murderers and thieves, apparently without greatly disturbing their susceptibilities. Eventually he alluded to them as *bosthoons* (an untranslatable Irish term of contempt). A fusillade of shots fired round his house at night showed that the thrust had gone home. As he had no possessions, not even a bicycle, which they could take, the firing of the shots was the only form of retaliation by which they could express their annoyance.

Most of the priests, somewhat late in the day, began to speak their minds freely, another announcing that “the Red Cross was respected by everybody in the world except naked savages and Irishmen” ; while at the reading of the Bishop of Kerry’s Pastoral, in several churches the Irregulars marched out as a protest of the denunciations it contained of them.

A *Daily Mail* a fortnight old came at last to hand. It described the National troops as “marching in the South from triumph to triumph.”

The particular form of triumph we experienced was the arrival in our midst of about sixty imperfectly equipped youths of the age and general appearance of Boy Scouts, under two officers, one

of whom was shot dead from behind a hedge a few days after his arrival. Outside the town every road was held by Republican bands, some of whom were billeted in every house and farm for miles around. If the National troops attempted to leave the town they were ambushed, while at night shots were fired at the Hall in which they had temporarily fortified themselves. Completely isolated, their presence in the town was only an added embarrassment to the distracted shopkeepers, whose supplies had long ago given out, and who, when they sent for fresh ones to Tralee, had their carts seized and plundered on the road by the Irregulars, who proceeded to cut off even the supplies of the town.

Rumours of the arrival of reinforcements, of landings at different places on the coast, too often proved false to be any longer accepted with anything but incredulous silence. One day a boat actually did appear on the far horizon of the bay. No sail was ever viewed by castaways on a desert island with greater excitement. As it drew nearer it was seen to be a small fishing smack, while a number of figures could be discerned huddled together on the deck. "The Free State reinforcements at last," the word went round. Immediately, from both shores, volleys of bullets rained upon the water. From the coastguard station, the local headquarters of the Irregulars, the rattle of machine-guns made itself heard. The fishing smack continued on its course unscathed for some time, when suddenly it seemed to have stuck on a sandbank in the middle of the bay. The tide was going out, the dusk was creeping up; the pitiless rain descending in solid sheets blotted out the mystery ship from further view. In the early dawn it crept up the bay and discharged at Ballykissane its



hapless band of school teachers, who had gone from Dublin some weeks before to learn Irish at Cahirciveen, where, finding themselves completely stranded, they had chartered a fishing smack to bring them round the coast somewhere on their way to Dublin. Later in the day I came upon them in Killorglin, black-coated, some of them top-hatted, looking like the pictures of the Pilgrim Fathers landing in the *Mayflower*; wet to the skin, and wearing the bedraggled aspect which a night in the open imparts, even under the most promising conditions, to most people. Spent as they had spent it, in an open boat, on a sand-bank, in a torrential downpour, without food or drink, fired at from both shores, uncertain as to whether they would ever be able to effect a landing at all, it was perhaps not surprising to find that, however much Irish they had acquired at the holiday College at Cahirciveen, the language with which the Dublin school teachers were expressing themselves in Killorglin, far from being the Erse of the pure-blooded Gael, was indistinguishable from that usually associated with the expression of the feelings of the outraged English.

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After long weeks, barren of incident, devoid even of rumour, came news of a devastating description: Arthur Griffith was dead and Michael Collins had been shot in an ambush in Cork.

The Republicans, drunk with patriotism and hate, had done to death the most romantic of their countrymen. Fate had removed the ablest, almost the only statesman in Ireland. Could a country buffeted by such misfortunes survive the anarchy into which we were daily sinking deeper?

The following, issued by the Army Chief after

Michael Collins' death, struck at any rate a courageous and hopeful note :

TO THE MEN OF THE ARMY—

Stand calmly by your posts. Bend bravely and undaunted to your work. Let no cruel act of reprisal blemish your bright honour. Every dark hour that Michael Collins met since 1918 seemed but to steel that bright strength of his and temper his gay bravery.

You are left each inheritors of that strength and that bravery. To each of you falls his unfinished work. No darkness in the hour, no loss of courage will daunt you at it.

Ireland ! The Army serves strengthened by its sorrow.

R. M. MALOCATHA,  
*Chief of the General Staff.*

## CHAPTER XX

### ANOTHER JOURNEY AND SOME BATTLES

IN the autumn I had to go to Dublin. I was fortunate in getting up during a temporary lull in hostilities on the line, but had to spend a night in the filthiest of hotels in Limerick. The hair-combings of the last occupant of the room were still in the dressing-table drawers, which also contained a dirty collar and some empty cigarette-boxes. Flinging the drawers into the passage, I got into bed, where both feet went through the tattered sheets. No sooner had I put out the light than firing started in the street. Bullets whizzed in every direction. I looked under the bed with the idea of taking cover, but decided I would rather die on top than among the sweepings of the room which, in the course of years, had accumulated underneath it.

In the morning I went to the bathroom. When I pointed out to the maid that there was no lock on the door she replied, "The way the country is nobody do be troubling about a bath, but if they do, sure you've only to sing or whistle so they'd know there's somebody in it."

I thought of my Aunt Frances Power, who on getting up one morning found the house on fire. Ringing the bell, she told the maid to inform the gardener of the fact, and proceeded herself to her bath as usual. I was about to follow the family precedent for cleanliness at all costs and to get

into the hotel one, when a colony of cockroaches, apparently alarmed by the unusual sound of running water, scuttled out from underneath it. The scream I emitted, far from scaring people away from the bathroom, had the effect of bringing all the "Commercials" out of their beds into it, where it was (not unreasonably) supposed a murder was being committed. In the commotion which resulted I fled precipitately back to my room and, unwashed, into the first available train.

In Dublin I came in for another battle. The Hibernian Hotel, in which I was staying, having applied for military protection, Free State soldiers were billeted on the top storey. In the middle of the night an attack was made on them by Irregulars. For about half an hour shots were exchanged, soldiers tore up and down the stairs, maids shrieked on the landings. I locked my door and sandbagged the bed with suitcases and pillows. In the morning I found, to my surprise, no damage whatever had been done to the hotel by any of the combatants, both sides having concentrated their fire on the manager's motor in the yard which my bedroom window overlooked. "Them lads are very quiet," said the waiter, as he brought me my breakfast; "they wouldn't like to be destroying anything."

After a week in Dublin, Lady O'Connell, who was also staying at the Hibernian and who was anxious to return to Killarney, and I decided to make a push for home, in spite of the protestations of our friends and relations.

As far as Limerick Junction the journey, if not distinguished by any undue haste, was, on the other hand, devoid of unusual incident. Arriving an hour and a half late, we dallied for another hour in the station, while the officials made up their minds whether they would venture any farther

or not. Ultimately, after changing into another train, we set off at a crawl for Buttevant over temporarily restored bridges and railway lines which, torn up in the night, were relaid every few days, only to be torn up again on the following night ; the damage perpetrated by the Republicans being encouraged, if not actually inspired, by enterprising car-drivers who were making colossal fortunes, conveying passengers and their luggage from one station to the next and who, at Buttevant, were waiting in massed formation to fall upon us. The train being unable to proceed any farther owing to the destruction of a bridge, we had no choice but to transfer ourselves to an outside car, and to drive the seven miles to Mallow behind a decrepit horse in a drenching mist.

At no time a hive of activity, Mallow, the junction connecting all the lines in the South of Ireland, presented a lamentable spectacle of decay. The magnificent ten-arch bridge across the Blackwater had been blown to pieces. The dingy hotel where we spent a dismal night was situated in the main street of the town, amidst the crumbling ruins of such civilization as remained after the previous year's burning by the Black and Tans, followed by the bombs and bullets of the Free Staters and Republicans, whose favourite battle-ground it seemed to have since been. The windows of the coffee-room were riddled with bullet-holes ; the floor was carpeted in crumbs ; two commercial travellers, with pained expressions on their faces, lay in profound slumber on the only two arm-chairs in the room ; on an ink-stained writing-table a *Strand Magazine* of 1899 served as a literary link between Mallow and the outer world.

After a night of indescribable discomfort, the next morning dawned, if anything, somewhat

wetter than the preceding day. After breakfast we started in a hired motor-car, the driver of which, we were given in confidence to understand, was an Ulster man who had deserted from the British Army, been discharged from the Republican, and was about to offer his services to the Free State : a military record which inspired us with complete confidence in the resourcefulness of his character. Avoiding the main roads, which for several weeks had been completely blocked, we arrived, by a circuitous route over a mountain, at Millstreet, where our inquiries for the road to Killarney were met with derisive shrieks.

"If you can lepp and you can swim you may perhaps get there ; not otherwise," we were told. "Every bridge is down and every road is blocked since the fighting on Sunday."

Conscious of proficiency both in "lepping" and swimming, we pushed undaunted on our way ; running almost immediately into a flying column of Free State troops, who stopped us and demanded the driver's permit. They were covered with mud, weary and war-worn, having been fighting for two days.

"You will meet Irregulars farther on," said the officer. "As you are only ladies they may not take your car ; if you had men with you they would certainly do so."

Bidding him good-bye, we charged with thrilled expectancy into the war-zone, an old man who subsequently directed us adding to our growing excitement by informing us that the "*Free Starters*" had gone back and the "*Publicans*" were on ahead.

Whether the latter were engaged in burying their dead, the number of which, according to the Free Staters, was almost past calculation, or whether

they were concealed behind the hedges, we never discovered. The disappointing fact remained, we never saw even one member of the phantom army in whose track we were supposed to be following.

"Are you all mad here?" I inquired of a group of men we next came upon, contemplating a gaping void in the middle of a village street, in front of which the car suddenly pulled up, only just in time to prevent our taking a wild leap into the river swirling in the precipitous depths beneath.

"More than half of us," was the cheerful reply, as a couple (presumably of the sane section) advanced with advice and directions to the driver, whom they conducted down a muddy declivity leading to the river, into which the car plunged, while we crawled, clinging to the parapet, over a narrow footway on to the other side. When nearly across, the engine of the car, which had been gradually getting into deeper water, suddenly stopped. Our hearts sank. Complete silence fell on the spectators for a moment; after which the entire population of the village, sane and insane, rushed to the rescue, throwing down stones and eventually hauling the car into shallower water, where the engine was restarted.

Having regained the road, we next found ourselves up against a gigantic tree, prostrate across our path, its branches sawn in such a fashion as to form snags, between or underneath which it did not seem possible for any vehicle to pass. But our motor-driver came up to our expectations in the matter of ingenuity, and by lowering the wind-screen and keeping his head to the level of the steering-wheel, advancing and reversing every few inches, the car emerged triumphantly, after a good quarter of an hour's manœuvring, on the other side. It was the first of many similar obstructions, some

of which we struggled under, some of which we squeezed our way round, and others which we avoided altogether by turning in at the gates of private demesnes and bumping our way through farm-yards, the walls of which had been pulled down by cars preceding us : experiences so unnerving that at Killarney the driver dumped our luggage down in the middle of the street and refused to proceed another yard.

Lady O'Connell was within reach of her home, but I had another eighteen miles to go. At the local garages all requests for a car to continue my journey proved useless. Only by aeroplane, I was told, could anybody hope to arrive at Killorglin ; " every bridge is down and all the telegraph posts and the wires twisted in and about them."

After over an hour spent in frantic appeals, the owner of a horse and car was finally prevailed upon to undertake the drive in consideration of a sum exceeding the first-class railway fare to Dublin.

For the first few miles we made our way through Lord Kenmare's demesne, over the grass, down on the shore of the lake, where the horse had to be led between the rocks and where the wheels of the car sank deep into the sand and gravel. After being almost bogged in a *bohereen* leading into another demesne, which we drove through, we proceeded for about a mile on a side road, when we encountered a broken bridge. A precipitous descent into a wood, across the river, over a field into a lane, on for a mile or two over trenches, getting off the car every five minutes, occasionally having to take the horse out and drag it over felled trees and down into ditches ; and then, the most formidable river we had yet met, with, on the opposite shore, an insurmountable bank topped with a barbed-wire fence. Seeing no possibility



of manœuvring this, we drove to a cottage, where a young woman came out and directed us.

"Drive down the bank by the bridge and go under the farthest arch, and then drive in the river for a bit until you come to a slope in the bank, and you'll see a way up on the other side."

An old man came out of the cottage and offered to come with us. I walked with him, while the horse and the car started down the river. We talked the usual platitudes, when suddenly, seizing me by the arm, he exclaimed, "Oh, God, aren't the times terrible?"

"Indeed they are," I replied fervently.

He broke into sobs. "Oh, God!" he cried. "Oh, God! my only son, he's on the run, and if they get him they'll shoot him . . . I can't shtop talking of it . . . That young girl you saw just now, she's my daughter. She's come all the way from England to mind me, but sure, nobody can mind me now. . . . I can't shtop talking, and to-morrow they're taking me to the asylum. . . ."

Looking back, after I had bidden him good-bye and climbed among the broken masonry up the cliff-like side of the tumbled arch, I could see him still standing by the lonely shore, his hands clasped in mental torture; "Oh, God! oh, God!" echoing in my ears as we drove on in the fading twilight on the deserted road; his tragic figure leaving in one's memory an unforgettable impression of Ireland's madness and despair.

It was dark when we finally arrived at Ard-nasidhe, having been five hours on the road. When it is realized that not a single obstruction we encountered after leaving Mallow would have presented the slightest difficulty to a lorryful of soldiers armed with a few planks and a couple of saws, the imbecility of the tactics of the Irregulars,

which merely caused delay and inconvenience to civilians, can hardly be understood. Yet for months past bands of able-bodied youths had been engaged in destroying bridges and blocking roads all over the South of Ireland with no other result. As soon as one road was cleared by the Free Staters another was obstructed, a work of devastation which, one felt, would only cease when every tree in the country had been felled and every bridge laid low.

Meanwhile, we are a philosophical and long-suffering race, and if on my journey I endured untold fatigue and discomfort, on the other hand I added considerably to my knowledge of the geography of my native land, which I came to realize was not a land at all but a vast waterway consisting of wide and rushing rivers, connected with each other by occasional strips of road and boggy fields ; while if ever I had to face the journey again under the same conditions—which heaven forbid !—instead of a trunk and a hatbox my luggage would, I decided, consist of a collapsible boat, a cross-cut saw and two deal planks, equipment which no traveller in Ireland should be without in the course of another civil war.

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## CHAPTER XXI

### AN UNWELCOME DELIVERANCE

“**H**AVE you nearly finished fighting?” I inquired one evening of three Irregulars whom I met strolling down the front avenue, after partaking of tea in my kitchen.

“No, we’re only just beginning,” one of them replied hopefully.

“Are you crazy?” I asked.

“Only Irish,” he replied.

“The same thing,” I suggested.

They laughed and proceeded towards the gate, their rifles slung across their shoulders, cigarettes in their mouths.

It is impossible, it has been said, to be serious in Ireland without being ridiculous. The Irregulars were a proof of the accuracy of this statement. For Irishmen they were quite serious. I say for Irishmen, for the Irish are never serious in the way the English are serious; the tongue of an Irishman, when he speaks, being usually in his cheek, while the tongue of an Englishman remains in the exact spot destined by Nature for its reception. As far, however, as an Irishman’s sense of humour allows him, the Irish Republican is serious. He believes to this day in his principles and believes in his readiness to die for them, without being unduly desirous of putting himself to the unpleasantness of the test. But, unlike the revolutionary of other lands, he has his lighter

moments when he is ready to exchange pleasantries with the people he is plundering.

I was fortunate so far in not having, like many of my neighbours, Irregulars actually billeted in the house. All those, however, who actually had to entertain those unwelcome guests testified to their extreme adaptability. When five of them arrived one night at the M——'s, demanding accommodation, the parlourmaid refusing to let them upstairs in their dirty boots, they not only removed them but took up the stair carpets. As Mr. M—— was leaving the house the next morning he heard his cook informing them: "You can have your breakfast or you can have your dinner, but I'm not going to give you both." When he returned some days later, after they had evacuated the house, he found everything intact, even to the silver on the sideboard.

All the same, signs were not wanting that, with their ever-increasing requirements, the Irregulars were growing more and more unwelcome as uninvited guests, not only in country houses but in farms and cottages. And nobody was more painfully aware of the fact than the wandering brigand himself, who, as he laid himself down on the bed he had obtained by force, and ate the breakfast unwillingly prepared for him, must often have been overcome with the "nobody loves me" feeling, to which even the most popular of people are at times subject. Signs of war-weariness, though never expressed, I gathered were visible at these strange parties in the kitchen, where, wet and bedraggled, the belligerent youth of Ireland regaled itself on tea and eggs at the expense of an unsympathetic population.

"You'd be sorry for them," says Bridget, "they look so dying, but sure why can't they have sense

and go home?" A solution of their troubles, as well as of ours, which showed, alas! no sign of materializing at the moment.

Like the Belgians awaiting in their devastated land the coming of the Allies, we awaited our deliverers from the bondage of boredom.

When they came it was at 3 a.m., the hour at which one's vitality is proverbially at its lowest.

It was six weeks since we had last been raided by the Republicans. The household was sleeping peacefully when the familiar knocking at the door, which we had almost forgotten, broke ominously once more on the stillness of the night. I turned on the light and awaited developments. In due course, Maria, the parlourmaid, attired in a mackintosh over her nightgown, presented herself, according to precedent, at my bedside, announcing in sepulchral tones that the house was surrounded with men.

"What do they want this time?" I inquired in a resigned voice.

"I'm sure I couldn't say," replied Maria; "they're Free Staters."

"Free Staters!" I exclaimed, "at last, our deliverers!" For weeks we had been awaiting their arrival, rapturously anticipating the end of Republican raids, the commandeering of our provisions and our property.

"You can open the door at once. I am delighted to see them. Tell them I will be down in a minute."

Maria, who was a determined Republican, left the room with an air of outraged indignation. I was glad of an opportunity at last of putting her in her place. I had always told her the day of reprisals would come. All the same, I wished it hadn't come in the middle of the night; and as

I put on a fur coat and tidied my hair I found myself marvelling at the strange unresponsiveness of one's attitude towards anybody who delivers one from anything at 3 a.m. in a hard November frost.

Ashamed of my ingratitude, I put all the enthusiasm I could muster into my greeting of the officer awaiting me in the hall.

"I'm delighted to see you," I remarked politely, but untruthfully. "Won't you come in? What can I do for you?"

He was a tall, gaunt, dilapidated-looking youth, and before replying to my fervent welcome he lighted a cigarette.

"Have you any Irregulars concealed on the premises?" he inquired aggressively, in a strong Belfast accent.

"Not at the moment," I replied, decidedly nettled at his manner; "if you had come some weeks ago you would have found plenty concealing themselves on the premises. I am not in the habit of concealing them."

"This place has a bad reputation," he remarked, looking at the ceiling.

"For what?" I inquired.

"For harbouring rebels," he replied.

"If you call harbouring rebels having your house forcibly entered by armed men, then no doubt the reputation is justified," I replied indignantly.

"I shall have to search the premises," he announced.

"You can search the outbuildings as much as you like," I said. "There are no men in this house at all." I opened the hall door. "The gardener has the keys of the outhouses. He lives over the garage in the yard."

Fortunately he seemed to consider my word sufficient guarantee, for he passed out of the open door and was swallowed up in the blackness of the night. I returned to bed, wondering how much Maria had heard of our conversation.

The next morning when I came down to breakfast I rang the bell.

"You've forgotten the milk," I said to Maria.

"There isn't any," she replied ; "the cows have not been milked. Jerry was arrested last night."

I was completely taken aback, but the sight of Maria's triumphant face had a steadying effect on my outraged feelings.

"Surely Dan could have milked them," I remarked, without the slightest display of emotion.

"Dan was arrested too, and Mike and Mickeen—everybody's gone," said Maria, flouncing dramatically out of the room.

I drank my coffee black, and repaired to the kitchen, where I found the cook twisting her apron into knots.

"Shwept, the whole lot, every mother's son of them," she exclaimed. "It'll be the women next ; *consecration* camps, same as in the African war, and everyone dyin' of fever——"

"Don't be ridiculous," I said ; "the kettle is boiling over. It must be a mistake. They'll all come back in a day or two."

"Never," she sobbed ; "it's shot they'll all be. Mrs. Sweeny and Mrs. Moynihan have been waiting to see you since eight o'clock—the poor things, it's crazy they are about Jerry and Dan."

In the servants' hall the two mothers were sitting in front of the fire, rocking themselves backwards and forwards.

"Oh, God ! me poor innocent boy," cried Mrs. Sweeny, "him that's never done anything but

milk your ladyship's cows, and go to Mass on Sundays, and help his poor old mother."

I tried in vain to console her.

"They'll shoot him for sure, the bloody murderers," she wailed; "the Black and Tans were *gintlemen* compared to the likes of them."

"Angels *they* were," exclaimed Mrs. Moynihan. "Never once did a Tan come near me house or even look at one of me boys; while last night didn't hundreds of them blashted Free *Stagers* break in and bring away me poor innocent Dan that never did a thing to anybody in all his life, and didn't they steal his rifle and all his bullets into the bargain?"

"Then he had a rifle?" I remarked.

"Of course he had a rifle," said Mrs. Moynihan. "Sure all the boys around have them, but never once did he fire it, not even in all the fighting he'd been in; the quietest boy in the world is Dan, and never one to kill or murder."

"A bit of the railway line they found in the field behind the house," sobbed Mrs. Sweeny; "tearing up the railway, they said Jerry was, him that niver went within a mile of it."

"How did the line get into your field?" I inquired.

"Indeed and I couldn't say, it must have been some blackguard put it there. 'I swear to God I'm innocent,' said Jerry, and never a lie did he tell in his life, whisha God help us," wiping her eyes in her shawl.

"What are we to do about it all?" I asked, when finally their sobs and laments showed signs of abating.

"If your ladyship will go to town and see the Gineral Commanding," suggested Mrs. Moynihan, "a word from yourself would get them off."



"I don't think it would have any effect," I replied. "I don't know the General, and this army isn't like the British Army."

"Ah, sure, that was the fine army," exclaimed Mrs. Sweeny, "and all the Ginerals in it brothers and cousins to your ladyship, and the Captains and the Colonels that'd be staying here in the house, the innocent crayturs, fishing in the river and going off with their sticks in the motor-car to the golf links, with no thought of war or murder in their hearts."

"Let Erin remember the days of old," I suggested.

"Ah! thim were the grand days," lamented Mrs. Moynihan.

It was five miles to the town, and every motor and horse and trap having been long ago removed by the Republicans, I had to cover the distance on foot.

"I want to see Brigadier-General Malone," I said to the sentry posted outside the hall, the windows of which were protected with sandbags and library books, for which so different a destiny had been anticipated by the late Mr. Carnegie, to whose munificence the erection of the building had been originally due.

"Tom," shouted the sentry, "find the Brig. There's a party wants to see him."

There are few things I resent more than being alluded to as "a party"; but the five-mile walk had broken my spirit and I collapsed meekly on a bench in an otherwise empty room, while a diligent search was made for the "Brig.," into whose presence I was eventually conducted. He was a tall, hatchet-faced youth, with a war-worn expression; but, unlike my visitor of the previous evening, his accent was of the South and his manner

sympathetic. Seating myself in the chair he offered me, I stated my mission.

"All of the men you mention were examined this morning," he replied; "their explanations were extremely unsatisfactory. We have reliable information that Sweeny is responsible for a great deal of the damage done to the railway line, a portion of which was found in his field, while arms and munitions were found under Moynihan's bed."

"I don't mind so much about Moynihan and the others," I said. "I can do without gardeners for a day or two, but you really must let out Jeremiah Sweeny. I have three cows waiting to be milked. You have taken not only all my men, but every available one in the neighbourhood. The cows must have someone to look after them."

"Sweeny has a bad record."

"There are others with worse."

"We must put a stop to this sort of thing."

"When I tell you that a motor and four bicycles have been stolen from my house, that several of my trees have been cut down, and all my apples and onions taken, that I have been raided seven times and have had armed men coming for meals to my house for months, you will perhaps understand that I am even more anxious than you to bring this business to an end. But it won't help matters in the least if, in addition to my other losses, my three cows are dead by to-morrow."

As Brigadiers go, he was of a type previously unknown to me. But he was Irish—in other words, he was human.

My journey home on a horse-car, with Jerry seated triumphantly on the other side, was in the nature of a Royal progress.

The Sweeny family, I gathered, were dedicating

what remained of their existence on earth to prayer and intercession to heaven on my behalf.

Mrs. Moynihan, on the other hand, regarded me coldly when I passed her on the road. Every day she went to watch Dan through the railings, peeling potatoes for his captors' dinner, inside the barbed-wire entanglements surrounding the Carnegie Hall.

## CHAPTER XXII

### COLLAPSE OF THE CIVIL WAR—COOKS AND THE FREE STATE ARMY

AT last, in 1923, the Civil War petered out. The Irregulars, vanquished and disheartened, acting unconsciously on Bridget's suggestion, "got sense and went home."

Unfortunately Bridget herself did likewise. I think she found life in Kerry too dull when the raids came to an end. Like all Irish maids, she was a Republican at heart, being firmly convinced that once Ireland became independent the position of mistress and servant would be reversed: I would be doing the cooking while she reclined on the drawing-room sofa with a cigarette in her mouth and her hand on the bell, the customary attitude, she imagined, of all employers, including myself.

"The rich will be poor and the poor will be rich," she was fond of asserting, which was as far as she had got in the principles of Marxian economics.

Meanwhile I hunted distractedly for a cook. I heard of a marvellous one who had been in America and who had been engaged by a Killarney hotel for the previous tourist season. Unfortunately the fighting had frightened the tourists away and the hotel had closed down. The cook was staying with relatives in the town and was looking for a job. Nobody, however, least of all myself, could afford to pay her the wages she was asking.

Eventually she went to the Barracks in Tralee, which the Free State Army had taken over from the British. As it was a new army with no traditions, the officers, originally recruited from the small farmer and shopkeeping class, and who had mostly risen from the ranks, had had no opportunity of acquiring the manners and customs of polite society. But some of them at any rate were anxious to adopt them.

"Things are a bit rough in this mess," the President said one day to the Commandant; "I think we ought to have *serviettes* for dinner."

"Anything for a change," said the Commandant, who thought "*serviettes*" was a new dish; "I'm sick to death myself of pig's head and cabbage."

With the advent of the American cook the Mess felt it was moving in the right direction, and as, previous to going to America, she had had experience with the British Army both in Cork and Fermoy, the President looked to her for guidance.

On taking up her duties she was horrified to find that the officers were in the habit of having an enormous dinner at 3 p.m., followed by "high tea" in the evening. She explained to the Mess President that a light lunch at 1.30, tea at 5 p.m. and dinner at 8 p.m. was the usual procedure, not only in armies but in "the best circles" in society. Reluctantly the officers fell in with the prescribed schedule. The day after her arrival, as she was preparing to send up the lunch at 1.30 as agreed upon, the Commandant sent down for his breakfast. Indignantly she sent a message by the orderly saying she could not possibly attend to his breakfast as she was getting the officers' lunch ready. Whereupon the Commandant burst into the kitchen in his pyjamas and, pointing a revolver at her head, asked was she going to get his breakfast or was she

not? Abandoning the lunch, she hastily began frying eggs and bacon.

At five o'clock, having sent up tea, she was about to partake of her own when a message came down that the officers were "roaring for pork chops with their tea"; whereupon she put on her hat and, seizing her suitcase, marched into the messroom; and after informing the astonished officers that "no army in the world had pork chops with its tea," walked out of the barracks.

Of the many applications I received from cooks, most were evasive on the subject of their cooking. What references they enclosed were generally from parish priests to the effect that they were regular and zealous in the performance of their religious duties—which, however helpful it might prove in the next world, would, I felt, be of little help in the mixing of sauces or the grilling of cutlets in this one. One suggested I should send her my photograph before she decided whether she would accept my situation or not, and another, whose persistent application I had already twice refused, sent me the following letter:

"DEAR LADY GORDON,

"I have your letter. I am sorry I did not suit. Some said I was not grand enough to please you. I don't be well always to be shure you heard. I wish people would stop telling tales of me. All the world have throuble—Lady Gordon I was one year where there was 400 men of Honor the barracks at Ballincollig one of them said Mary O Sullivan if you want to get married you will get your choice of four hundred men Thanks be to the Queen of Heaven I said it is a great word. Lady Gordon the year of the pilgrimage to Lourdes I got better I have seen wonders. I am sure you

will believe me I am praying a good deal to the Queen of the most holy Rosary to make me well With love from Mary O'Sullivan to dear Lady Gordon."

In the end I engaged a cook who came from Cork, where she had been for three years with a General, whom she described as "a fright." "He was great on French dishes, pill of chicken dyed saffron and the like, and if they weren't right he'd roar at you," she explained.

Judging by the *pilaff de volaille* which I subsequently traced in the cookery book as the origin of the "pill of chicken dyed saffron," and which she served to us one night, the General must have done a "power of roaring" in the three years of her occupancy of his kitchen in Cork. Yet he sent her out into the world with a "character" which would have led me to suppose that I was engaging a member of the Escoffier family, if I had not been well versed in "references" from Cork, where I imagine the inhabitants have unusually athletic digestions, judging by their taste in cooking. As she was the first I had heard of who wasn't mad and who at any rate understood the elementary principles of her profession, I decided to keep her. She had an original mind and the latent instincts of an artist revealed themselves one day when I was ordering dinner for some expected guests.

"Is there gentlemen coming?" she inquired, "because I couldn't put me heart into a savoury for ladies."

On one occasion I sent a cook to Cork—a Kerry girl whom I had vainly tried to train in my own house. Apparently she had a great success, for when, a year or two later, she returned on a holiday, she came to see me.

"Do you remember them cheese balls you used to say, my lady, were like lumps of lead?" she asked.

I remembered them only too clearly.

"Well then," she remarked triumphantly, "they're *cracked* about them in Cork; whenever there is company to dinner, 'Mary,' says the mistress, 'make us some of your *delicious* cheese balls!'"

There is one thing to be said in favour of cooks from Cork—they keep one thin and save one doing cures. People who live in the South of Ireland never have to go to Carlsbad or Kissingen for the sake of their figures. A visit to Mrs. Magrath's registry office has the same effect, keeping them to the end of their days wiry and brisk, in spite of the tremendous teas they are bound to indulge in to make up for the culinary deficiencies of lunch and dinner.

Undoubtedly the root of our domestic difficulties in Ireland lies in the fact that nobody really wants to learn anything. Girls can seldom be induced to train as kitchenmaids; they always want to begin at the top and not at the bottom of their profession. Cooking, instead of being an art, is looked upon merely as a tiresome method of earning enough money to pay for a passage to America. Nobody is in the least interested in it. After living for over three hundred years on potatoes, the Irish are only aware of one way of cooking them and are not always successful with that. That you should require any variety in your food is looked upon as eccentricity on the part of the "gentry," while your ideas on cleanliness and tidiness are generally designated as "notions," as I discovered in the case of Hannah Maria, whom I engaged as a between-maid soon after the arrival



of the new cook, and who was described by her mother as "rough but hardy, a regular mountain galloper."

The description was appropriate. Before breakfast she galloped round the back premises. From ten till twelve she galloped round the bedrooms. After an hour of deafening trampling overhead, I went upstairs on the morning of her arrival, and told her it was neither necessary nor advisable to do the bedroom grates in heavy and nailed boots. The next morning she rose out of the ashes in the grate in a pair of high-heeled, white canvas shoes. Again I expressed my disapproval. She looked surprised, but being obviously anxious to please me, when I next met her on a wild stampede down the passage I observed that the white shoes had been partially black-leaded and now presented a mottled surface suggestive of much-used blotting paper.

To my comments on their distressing appearance, I added some further criticism on the safety-pins by which her skirt was held together at her waist.

"Sure I have no hips to hang it on," she remarked.

I endeavoured to explain to her the system of hooks and eyes, by which skirts are usually made to adhere to even the flattest of figures.

"Such *notions* as her ladyship have, to be sure," I heard her exclaiming to the housemaid as I passed down the passage; "she must have got them living in England."

## CHAPTER XXIII

DE VALERA—A WORLD TOUR—CEYLON—HONG-KONG  
—JAPAN—VANCOUVER ISLAND—THE ROCKIES—  
THE C.P.R.

THE way the Dail (Irish Parliament) got down to work, and the success with which it grappled with the problems confronting it, must have astonished the Unionists, who had always proclaimed that the Irish were not fit to govern themselves. No more Herculean task ever devolved upon an untried and inexperienced group of legislators than that of cleaning up the mess caused by the Civil War. If, in the matter of the execution of the Irregular leaders such as Rory O'Connor and Mellowes, as well as some of the rank and file, they displayed the same severity which they had resented in the British, on the other hand they showed considerable moderation under serious provocation and were never deterred by craven fears of unpopularity from facing their obligations and responsibilities.

In the face of the misconceptions and the confusion of ideals which prevailed in the Civil War, when brother often actually fought against brother and all Ireland was divided against itself, it must be remembered that the issue at stake was not so much, as people usually imagined, the Treaty versus a Republic, but the question as to whether any ordered or settled Government was going to be at all possible in Ireland. The defeat of the

Irregulars was not a defeat for the Republic, which remains to this day the ideal of a large proportion of the people. The Treaty having been ratified in 1922 by a majority of seven in the Dail, the Irish people had expressed their willingness to accept it (if only as a temporary expedient). For the subsequent substitution of the bullet for the ballot Mr. de Valera was largely responsible. Refusing to acknowledge the fact that, constitutionally, he had been beaten, he proceeded to plunge Ireland in all the horrors of bloodshed rather than accept the verdict of the polls.

In any country but Ireland de Valera would be incredible. The secret of his original success was largely due to his position as Professor of Mathematics at Blackrock College. Uneducated Ireland is always impressed with "learning" and, although in no way intellectual, he possesses a magnetic attraction for young men. Practically unknown in Ireland outside Gaelic League circles, he did not come into the limelight until after the Easter Week rebellion. Acclaimed in 1917 as the leader of the extreme Republicans, he has since devoted his amazing gifts of rhetoric and persuasion to developing all the slumbering passions of his countrymen against England and against each other. Just as it is not love of God but hatred of the Pope which unites in a solid front all the Orangemen of the North, so, in the South, animosity to England and to each other is the binding factor in Irish politics under his guidance. Encouraging if he did not instigate the Civil War, which was as unnecessary as it was cruel and disastrous, he has invariably put Party before Country and used his influence against conciliation and compromise. He no more wanted a settlement over the Treaty in 1921 than he wants one of the

economic war to-day. A fanatic possessed of the one idea of making Ireland politically and economically independent of England, he has always preferred to sacrifice the welfare of the country and of everybody in it to calling a halt in the ruthless pursuit of his goal. Hopeless as a statesman, he is an astute and skilful politician. And unfortunately he can argue the head off anybody.

\* \* \* \* \*

There being no longer any necessity to remain at home and "hold the postern gate" against the enemy, I let Ard-na-sidhe in November 1925 and went round the world, starting with a couple of months in Ceylon, where I stayed with my cousins, the Hugh Englands. Hugh was in command of the *Colombo*, one of those "ram you, damn you" first-class cruisers which are the pride of the Navy; and after a delightful Christmas at the famous Galle Face Hotel we went up to Diyatalawa, the Naval camp, where he had the Admiral's bungalow. It was wonderfully situated, surrounded by mountains, and the climate was perfect. There was a good golf course which, to an indifferent player like myself, presented alarming features in the shape of snakes in the long grass and leeches in the ditches, which should have had the effect of making one drive a straight ball. Unfortunately I "sliced" and "pulled" as usual, but infinitely preferred losing the ball and the hole, as I usually did, to following it in its perilous flights out of bounds.

From Diyatalawa we all went up to Nuwara Eliya to stay with the popular G.O.C., Colonel Higginson (of the Dublins), and his charming wife, and from there I went to Irish friends, the Malcolms, who had a large tea estate at Dolosbage, and afterwards on a wonderful motor tour of the island,

to the ruined city of Anuradapura, to Polanuruwa and the tanks, as the huge artificial lakes several miles long are called, to the astonishing rock of Sigiri, through the jungle and up mountains on terrifying zigzag roads looking down from dizzy heights on to great distances of rolling country, with lesser peaks and crags rising out of the blue mist.

If anything more lovely than Ceylon exists on this earth I have never met it or heard of it ; while as to the flowers—well, one of the advantages of travelling is that on dismal days of leaden skies at home one has only to shut one's eyes to behold again in vision the dazzling glory of cannas and hibiscus, of poinsettas and bignonias, to recall the tropical splendour of the Peradeniya Gardens, to smell again the fragrant perfume of the frangipani at the Temple gates of Kandy.

Early in March, another cousin, Noël Power (now Mrs. Windeyer), joined me, and we pushed off to China with every intention of getting to Peking, a journey which, however, we did not succeed in accomplishing, owing to the inevitable Chinese war being in progress. Actual fighting I don't think would have prevented us at any rate from making the attempt, but, at the time, the tearing up of the railway lines seemed to have been the chief occupation of the rival factions—and this was a form of warfare with which we were already too painfully familiar to feel like sampling it again in an unknown country and under conditions fraught with considerably more alarming perils than we were accustomed to in Ireland.

So we stayed in Hong-Kong for a fortnight while awaiting a ship to Japan. We might as well have been in Portsmouth Harbour, which, indeed, in a fog, it greatly resembled. It looked its best from the sea as we were leaving it. But

at any rate it was better than Shanghai, where we fortunately were only obliged to put in twelve hours.

Japan, on the other hand, was entrancing. People said it was spoilt and that one should have seen it twenty years before. To me it could never have been more fascinating. The month we spent there was one unceasing thrill. The delightful little women klop-klopping in their wooden sandals down the streets, their gaily coloured paper umbrellas making of a wet day something cheerful and romantic, had all the elfish charm of Fairyland. In Kyoto one felt not only back in a vanished age but on another planet, so completely did it differ from that on which one habitually moved and dwelt. The temples, unlike the churches and cathedrals of Europe, shut in among noisy streets full of clanging trams and hooting cars and ceaseless traffic, are set on lovely hill-sides or in sheltered nooks, approached by broad flights of steps. Surrounded by stately courts and shady gardens, with stone and bronze lanterns, blossoming plum- and cherry-trees, with lovely views of distant mountains, they breathe peace and repose and an alluring simplicity which almost made me feel like embracing the Shinto faith as, seated one day near a shrine, I watched a Japanese family approach to pay their morning homage to the Sun God. Up the little hill they pattered, the father in his black kimono, the mother in a purple one, her gaily clad baby strapped to her back. Arrived at the Shrine, the father rang a bell (to frighten away the evil spirits), clapped his hands (to attract the attention of the God), uttered his simple greeting, "Hail to Thee this day, August One," put a copper into a collection box the size of dustbin, and away they all trotted.

But perhaps there are more complications in the ritual than appeared that lovely spring morning in Kyoto, and the less picturesque rites of the Church of Ireland may after all be preferable to a cult including, in addition to the worship of the sun (which comes more or less naturally to anyone like myself living in a rain-sodden country), the worshipping of one's usually impossible ancestors. At any rate I do not feel sufficiently indebted to mine to undertake providing their spirits daily with rice pudding and whisky—the nearest equivalent in Ireland to the regulation fare prescribed for them in Japan—although as a matter of fact they would be more than welcome to derive what ghostly comfort they could from my own share of these, to me, equally distasteful articles of diet.

After the restrained and austere beauty of the Kyoto temples, with the delightful upward-curving tilt of their roofs, the barbaric, lacquered splendour of those at Nikko was bewildering. Without apparent architecture, they seemed to consist of ornament piled upon ornament. Anywhere else but in their marvellous environment of mountain and gigantic cryptomeria their extravagance would have seemed mere decoration gone mad. As it was, one accepted them, rather dizzily, as characteristic of the artificiality of a country one could never hope to understand.

Japan is supposed to be the land of flowers, but, strangely enough, there are practically no wild ones, and we were too early for the irises, the lilies and the lotuses of which one had heard and read so much. The mountains are unusually bare of vegetation, which, however, is not surprising, as they seem to be always falling down. At Miyano-shita we saw one, the lower slopes of which had been heavily cemented, presumably to keep it up on

end ; while out of another, which we ascended in carrying-chairs, sulphur and steam poured from cracks and fissures all around. We only came in for one earthquake and that was not a serious one. We were in a theatre in Tokio and were too thrilled by the performance to pay much attention to it. A long residence in Ireland has a steadying effect on the nerves. Familiarity with battle, murder and sudden death leaves one comparatively calm in the face of mere upheavals on the part of Nature.

Twelve hideous boring days (owing to the difference in time there were two Thursdays in one week) we spent on a grey and heaving ocean ironically called Pacific instead of Horrific, which would have been far more suitable, on our way from Yokohama to Vancouver Island. The *Empress of Australia* on which we made the voyage had been originally built for the Kaiser to tour in round the world he proposed to conquer. She was top heavy and rolled even on the few occasions when there was no apparent necessity for her to do so. And she was of such vast proportions that one day a bewildered passenger, hopelessly lost in the mazes of the Tudor Library, the Empire boudoir, the Louis-Seize drawing-room, the Georgian lounge, was heard to ask a passing steward if he could tell her "the way to the sea."

Another story of the same liner which amused me was of the Captain who one day stumbled upon an individual in a new and strange uniform.

"Who the hell are you?" he inquired, in the affable style employed by sea captains in a hurry.

"Please, sir, I'm the ship's gardener," was the disconcerting reply.

In spite of the unpleasantness of the weather I was not actually ill, but one day I felt like it. I retired to my cabin and rang the bell.



"I think I'm going to be sick," I said to the stewardess, who looked horrorstruck at my remark.

"I will tell the steward," she replied haughtily.

"I think I am going to be sick," I said to the latter when he arrived on the scene; "please bring me a basin."

The steward looked even more astonished.

"I will tell the under-steward," he remarked, withdrawing hastily.

"Please bring me a basin," I said to the under-steward who, after a long interval, put his head through the door.

"Oh," he exclaimed, "I will tell the cabin-boy!"

By the time the latter arrived, with a cardboard box tied up with pink ribbon, I had recovered, but the episode left me with the feeling that I had been guilty of some strange lapse; that on an "Empress" liner people were not sick—or if they were, they did not mention the fact to anybody of higher rank than a cabin-boy. I was glad to think I had not told the Captain, or the "Master at Arms," as the policeman is called, who lurks at night in the shadowy gangways ready to pounce on suspected thieves or lovers stealing into cabins other than their own.

Apart from this curious tendency to look upon sea-sickness as an unexpected and unnatural proceeding on an "Empress" liner, I have nothing but admiration to record of the C.P.R. "There are three perfect organizations in the world," as a fellow-passenger remarked, "the Roman Catholic Church, the Standard Oil Company" (in which I imagine he was personally interested) "and the Canadian Pacific Railway." I agreed enthusiastically with him. Nothing could have exceeded the perfection of the arrangements made for one's

comfort, or the courtesy of the charming young men who, at every port, were awaiting one's arrival or departure.

Somewhere on our journey—I think it was at Yokohama—I presented an official with half a dollar and a superfluous trunk. Months afterwards I found it in my cabin on board another “Empress” liner at Quebec. When I expressed my astonishment to the baggage officer, he said, “Why, whatever happens to luggage in your country?”

“In Ireland,” I replied, “unless you get out at every change and look after it yourself, in all probability you will never see it again,” and told him the story of the Kerry man who, travelling for the first time by train, got out at every station to see if his “little thrunk” was still in the van, until the exasperated guard at last remarked: “I wish to God you were an elephant and then your little thrunk would be attached to your person.”

Our funds were getting low, and on landing at Victoria we went to a small hotel instead of to the luxurious C.P.R. one. On the back of my bedroom door was a notice saying, “Dancing, singing and laughing not allowed. Visitors of the opposite sex strictly prohibited.”

At dinner, when we asked for a bottle of Burgundy, we were told that if we wanted drink of any description we would have to go into the town and get a permit costing two dollars, after which we could procure anything we required, but we would have to partake of it (presumably silently and alone) in our bedrooms, as drinking in public was strictly *verboten*. Under the circumstances we abandoned any idea of twining the vine leaves in our hair.

Vancouver Island, apart from this peculiar form

of prohibition, was like Ireland on a larger and more beautiful scale. The golden broom stretching for miles round Victoria against the blue sea and snow-capped mountains was an unforgettable sight. The "Butchart" rock garden was a dream, and Maple Bay, where we stayed in a delightful hotel, was, I felt, the only place I could ever settle in if driven out of Ireland. But the poverty in which people lived, and the unceasing struggle for life, was distressing. "What an extraordinary number of garages there are here," I remarked to an inhabitant, pointing to innumerable little wooden huts with tin roofs dotted about in clearings of the forest.

"Garages!" he exclaimed. "Those are *houses*!"

Work, one heard, was unobtainable, except in domestic service, and even that was scarce, as few of the residents kept servants of any description, while most of them, one gathered, lived by taking in each other's washing.

We came home through the Rockies, which I found terrifying in their immensity, spending a few days at Banff and visiting the world-famous Lake Louise, the beauty of which, to me, was somewhat marred by a nine-storeyed hotel on an asphalted shore. This, however, was what appealed most to our fellow-tourists, who spent the limited time at our disposal under its roof, while Noël and I climbed the wooded slopes above the tiny lake, which was of the most exquisite and indescribable shade of blue and which lay like a jewel in its wondrous setting of mountain and glacier. Neither sapphire blue nor jade green or any other description I have ever read can convey any idea of the colour of the lakes and rivers of Canada, the beauty of which can no more be put into words than it can ever be forgotten by anybody

who has once looked into their alluring ice-clear depths.

Overwhelmed with the stupendous grandeur of the scenery through which we passed, I sat in the motor-coach on our return journey, speechless and almost dizzy with wonder and admiration.

"You bet it's *dandy*," said an American seated beside me, looking suddenly up from the book in which he had been absorbed throughout the expedition, throwing a casual glance at the snow-capped mountains rising to incredible heights above the rushing waters of the incomparable Bow River Valley.

We travelled as tourists and, as such, saw nothing of the real life of the people in any of the countries we visited. Our impressions were therefore superficial and possibly valueless. Two, however, apart from the scenery, remain in my memory: the greatness of the British Empire, whose flag was proudly waving in almost every port, and the previously unrealized preponderance of salt water compared to land in this otherwise delectable world of ours.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### A SAD FAREWELL—LISMORE—A MEET

ON my return from my travels I found Ireland on top of the wave. People who had fled the country were returning. Compensation was being paid not only by the British Government for damage done under the Black and Tan *régime*, but by the Free State for that caused by the Irregulars. Out of the ashes of their former homes new ones were arising, not so large but more convenient and up to date. Ex-Unionists who had not been burnt out were slightly envious.

Compared with other counties Kerry had not fared so badly. No conditions had accompanied the British compensation, but under the Free State the money had to be spent rebuilding in Ireland. All the damaged bridges and roads had been restored. Money was plentiful and life was normal once more. Colossal schemes in the shape of Casinos and mammoth Hotels, fathered by Lord Castlerosse and Mr. Harrington, a wealthy American who had settled near Killarney, were in the air. A syndicate of millionaires arrived on the scene from New York and were rushed over Kerry. Polo grounds, golf courses, country clubs with swimming-pools and squash-racket courts were indicated with a wave of the hand ; while a stag hunt by moonlight was staged for their benefit the night before they left, intoxicated and enraptured with the possibilities of the new Kerry. The



ARD-NA-SIDHE



fact that they were never seen or heard of again in no way damped the enthusiasm of the promoters of these fantastic schemes, who still live in hope of the ultimate Americanization of the last spot on earth suited to an experiment of the kind.

More promising were the Englishmen who, attracted by the lowness of our Income Tax, were fluttering round in search of bargains in the way of houses with fishing and shooting, one of whom became the fortunate owner of Ard-na-sidhe. Parting with it took an ever-increasing financial strain off my mind, but it left a hole in my heart which has never been filled. . . .

I have never gone back ; but sometimes, on summer evenings, my spirit returns to the Wonderland of Kerry, wandering round the gardens I made and loved, listening to the wind sighing in the tall fir-trees, to the lake water lapping against the rocks beneath the terrace wall, seeing in the misty twilight Isles of Joy and Isles of Song dimly outlined in the Western sea, murmuring in my dream the farewell of the Tuatha-de-danaan, when Nuada, the last of their chieftains, said to the conquering Milesian : " We give you Ireland, but since our hands have fashioned it we will not utterly leave the country. We will be in the white mist that clings to the mountains ; we will be in the quiet that broods on the lakes ; we will be in the joy shout of the rivers ; we will be in the secret wisdom of the woods. Long after your descendants have forgotten us they will hear our music on sunny raths, and see our great white horses lift their heads from the mountain tarns and shake the night dew from their crested manes ; in the end they will know that all the beauty in the world comes back to us and their battles are only the echo of ours. . . ."



Lismore, where I set up house on leaving Kerry, is in the County Waterford, but it never seems to me to be in Ireland. The River Blackwater which flows beneath my house comes, it is true, from Kerry, but as it winds its way out towards the sea it seems to acquire something of the smugness of the Thames ; as it passes under the Castle walls, something of the deadness of feudalism.

Once the home of the great Earl of Cork and three times in the course of centuries burnt to the ground, Lismore Castle, architecturally disfigured in the early part of the nineteenth century by the addition of meaningless "Norman" battlements and towers, still dominates the river above which it rises impressively : but the soul has gone out of it.

One of the many homes of the Dukes of Devonshire, it maintained for generations a certain tradition of feudal splendour, only to acquire in recent years, as the "Lismore Estates Company," a commercial aspect hitherto unknown in the reckless annals of Irish landlordism. One wing is let ; the rest is the home, at fleeting intervals, of Lord Charles Cavendish and his American bride, Adele Astaire, of dancing fame. From time to time the searchlight of journalism shines fitfully upon it, suggesting hectic revelry within its walls. But that, one imagines, is only journalese ; at any rate, if revelry obtains within the Castle precincts, no sound of it penetrates to a sadly disappointed neighbourhood.

Though lacking in gaiety and vitality, Lismore has charm and a peaceful serenity which make it a restful retreat in the twilight of one's life. If nobody in it at times seems quite alive, on the other hand nobody is wholly dead. The little town is clean and friendly, the neighbours, far and

wide, kind and pleasant ; the woods in autumn are a glory of red and gold.

In my sheltered garden, flowers flourish as they never did in storm-tossed Kerry. In spring double cherries fling their creamy whiteness against a sky of cloudless blue. By the river-bank masses of rhododendrons blaze in June and the great flat flowers of the purple *Iris Kaempferii* grow large as saucers, while in the autumn scarlet oaks and crimson maples stand out in flaming contrast to the greyness of the clouds. Nowhere have I heard birds sing so sweetly or so persistently, swans float majestically on the clear brown water, herons nest in the tall tree-tops and stand contemplatively on the wall above the weir, over which the tired river gently falls with soothing murmurings.

Like Abraham Cowley my wish had always been

ere I descend into the grave,  
May I a small house and large garden have,  
And a few friends and many books, both true,  
Both wise and both delightful too !

The wish has been fulfilled.

Sometimes when things go wrong, when Death brings sorrow and illness suffering, or when a trusted friend instead of being true proves unaccountably false, I find consolation in books that never fail, in flowers that never pall, and think with unutterable horror of what life would be in a London flat or in a cottage on the side of a tarmac road.

With the exception of the few intimates who really matter in one's life I have as a rule found places more satisfying than people, and, while I can live quite happily for weeks on end without society, existence without a garden is to me unthinkable. Looking through old diaries I have sometimes

been amazed at the names I come across of people I have met and known and utterly forgotten—whereas someone has only to mention the name of some place I have been to and immediately my brain recalls—a branch of plum blossom by a Japanese temple—a cypress against a snow-capped mountain under a sky of cloudless blue—a sea-gull dipping into a jade-green sea—a date-palm rising out of the tawny gold of the African desert. Always in my memory there is colour, and whatever hopes I have of heaven are all of flowers of unimaginable brilliance and fragrance. Meanwhile,

The sunset is not yet, the morn is gone ;  
Yet in our eyes the light hath paled and passed ;  
But twilight shall be lovely as the dawn  
And night shall bring forgetfulness at last.

\* \* \* \* \*

If any readers get as far as this, they will be astonished to find, in a book by an Irishwoman about Ireland, no mention of hunting. The reason for this strange omission lies not so much in the fact that I have been writing about Kerry, one of the few counties (if not the only one) in which there is no hunting, as in the more remarkable one that I have not only never hunted but have never wanted to. But as I now live in a part of Ireland where people hunt (to describe it as a hunting centre might be misleading), I feel some allusion to the subject will be expected of me. All I can do, however, is to describe a meet at which I once played, I fear, an inglorious part.

It was a bleak December day with drenching showers. We met at the house of a neighbour, where we partook of coffee which was hot and pleasant and must have been comforting to the members who had hacked for several miles in the rain and were endeavouring to dry their dripping

garments in front of the drawing-room fire. In an interval between the showers the "field," consisting of eight women and two men, moved off to the covert. I followed in the car and took up a strategic position on the road. Drawing was a lengthy proceeding, during which some of the ladies of the Hunt produced lip-sticks and made up their complexions under a dripping tree. The rest amused themselves with local gossip and disparaging criticisms of each other's mounts. The Master rode excitedly up and down cursing loudly and making rude remarks to everybody, regardless of their age or sex. The horses fidgeted restlessly in the distracting fashion of their race, sidling backwards down the road, standing on their hind legs, pawing the ground and tossing their heads backwards and forwards. The covert was on a hill on the right above the road. The field were out of sight on the other side of the hill, when suddenly, on the left of the road, at the bottom of a long and narrow valley, I saw a fox creeping stealthily along. The friend who was with me in the car saw it too.

"Shouldn't we do something?" she said.

"Do what?" I asked.

"Hulloa or make a noise."

"Why?" I asked.

"Well, they're looking for a fox, aren't they?"

"That is their affair, not ours," I remarked. I dislike killing animals. While realizing the painful necessity for doing so on occasions, I have no sympathy with the uncivilized custom of chasing them to death for pleasure. As for "blooding" children and digging out foxes which have gone to ground, such barbaric practices revolt me. A great many hunting women say they agree with me. But I observe they go on hunting just the same, excusing

themselves with rapturous allusions to the exhilarating effect of an autumn morning on horseback.

"Blank as usual," exclaimed an irate woman, jumping into the road almost on top of me. "There never are any foxes anyway in this rotten place."

I expressed surprise and wandered down the road thinking, with inward satisfaction, of the poor innocent fox I had saved from an unpleasant and gory end. Leaning against a gate was an old countryman, his eye glued on a distant field, where a small object was dimly discernible slinking in the direction of a spinney.

"That's the rowt (route) he do *always* be following," he remarked, pointing with his stick to the fox, which far from owing its life to me was apparently more intimately acquainted than I was with the Hunt.

## CHAPTER XXV

### THE FUTURE—PATRIOTISM—A PRAYER

“**A**ND what of Ireland?” I inquired of a friend who knows our country well.

“Hopeless, *but not really serious*,” was his facetious diagnosis.

As an example of its paradoxical accuracy I may draw attention to the fact that though, ever since the victory of the Republicans at the polls in 1932, as a class, we have all been poised for flight, so far we have not even begun to flap our wings. Aware, by this time, that the only way to live in Ireland is with our trunks packed in the hall and a panttechnicon van waiting at the end of the telephone, we are at any rate prepared for any eventuality, which, on previous occasions, we were not. Believing, as the more realistic of us do, that the next move in the “Irish question” lies in complete separation from England, we await—not without misgiving—the inevitable proclamation of our independence.

“You can have your Republic and its consequences whenever you like,” Mr. Thomas is reported to have said to Mr. de Valera. Whether Ireland will survive the consequences, in the shape of economic isolation, remains to be seen. Things under it cannot be much worse than they are at present. Everything, as it is, is taxed, from cows to coffins, from agricultural machinery to feeding-bottles. If anything evades the Customs under

one heading it becomes contraband under another. Asking at the chemist's one day for a box of pills, and being handed a strange-looking variety, I requested the usual sugar-coated ones.

"Sugar-coated pills is confectionery and therefore subject to duty," replied the assistant.

As one lands in the dawn at Rosslare after a visit to London, the harassed officials searching one's luggage refer to colossal lists of duties which change with bewildering frequency. "There wasn't a duty on it yesterday but there may be to-day," they explain apologetically—while in the matter of books, one's library ones are apt to be banned between the date of posting and delivery, and confiscated on arrival—all of which is "a great inconvenience to travellers and readers," as the Customs officer sympathetically observes.

The ban on knowledge is bound to react. The future of the world lies with countries who rule and who think scientifically. And in Roman Catholic Ireland science is taboo. Allusions to it, however, are sometimes vaguely made, even in the pulpit, as happened in a distant Kerry parish at the time when Dr. Barnes was preaching in London on the theory of evolution. The congregation had incurred the wrath of the Reverend Father, who wound up his condemnation of their stupidity by remarking that "in England there is a Bishop who tries to make out we are all descended from monkeys, but if he had known yez it's from *asses* he'd have said ye came."—A new and startling biological theory which might be equally aptly applied to other parts of Ireland.

Not only in science but in the matter of general education the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church is distinctly retrograde. By keeping people ignorant it hopes to preserve their faith; by

suppressing knowledge of the facts of life, to keep their morals intact. Its attitude to Birth Control is perhaps understandable in a country so sparsely populated as Ireland. Its denunciations on the subject are fierce and not always intelligible to peasant mentality. An unfortunate woman in Kerry, about to give birth to her thirteenth child, was one day bewailing her fate to me. Protestants, she hinted, knew of "ways" by which such excessive prolificness could be averted.

Having no desire to call down on my head the wrath of the parish priest, who, sooner or later, would have been sure to hear of any suggestion I might make on the subject, I told her that any limitation of her family in the future must be a matter of arrangement with her husband.

"Sure, amn't I tired of telling him to conthrol himself," she replied. "'I can't,' sez he, 'the Church don't *allow* me to.'"

\* \* \* \* \*

Not only in Ireland but all over the world the social order of centuries is being broken up. Presumably it will be rebuilt on entirely different principles. To change the structure of society one has, however, not only to change the institutions of a country but the character of its inhabitants. And the character of Ireland will require a lot of changing. Life is grim, and is likely to be grimmer in the future. Humour is disappearing and gloom is deepening. If Ireland is to have any future it will only be possible through hard work and not through the waving of flags and the spouting (in Irish) of empty resolutions. Whether, in other countries, patriotism is a virtue or a vice, in Ireland it is a deadly microbe eating its way into the mentality and undermining the *morale*



of the population. It is the one standard by which everybody is judged, rewarded or condemned. In her frenzy to emancipate herself from the influences which for generations sought to anglicize her, Ireland appears to have parted with any intelligence she ever possessed, so much so that Irish patriotism to-day is little more than an absurd obsession of parochial minds, in whom any real love of country is lost in boastful raving or foolish self-sufficiency. By constantly proclaiming the brightness of our intellect, our ready wit, our native resourcefulness, we have, in process of time, come to consider ourselves an unusually gifted and intelligent race—a conclusion all the more remarkable for the fact that we are, in reality, the most ignorant and the most inefficient nation in Europe. Industrially and agriculturally our stupidity is almost unbelievable. In matters of finance our history to-day is a mere track of ruin and bankruptcy. The ideal of service is unheard of. That hotels with a few exceptions are not run for their comfort and convenience is obvious to every tourist. That businesses are not opened for supplying the wants of customers is amusingly proved by an experience of Stephen Gwynn, who relates in one of his books the efforts made in a certain country town to obtain fish—an almost unprocureable article of diet in country districts. Having at last succeeded in opening a shop for the purpose, the promoter went away on a holiday. On his return, he was horrified to find the shop closed. Searching the town for the manager he had left in charge, he found him propping the wall of a public-house.

“Why have you closed down?” he inquired.  
“Wasn’t the shop a success?”

“Indeed an’ it was,” replied the manager,

removing his pipe from his mouth; "it was the way people *tormented* me for fish. I couldn't be troubled with them any more."

Intensely realistic by nature, the Irish have their sentimental moments, and in these they are given to thinking of themselves with pride as an ancient race with a glorious past, forgetting that the more ancient a people are, the nearer they are to death. Although Ireland is by no means on her death-bed to-day, there is a feeling of decay in the air. The sadness which has always hovered over her lovely mountains and desolate bogs, the melancholy decay which lies on her dreary towns and dilapidated villages, is intensified a thousand-fold. Civilization is a product of prosperity. There has never been much of either in Ireland; there is less than ever at the present moment. Mr. de Valera's ideal, we are told, is a Christian Socialist state, where everybody will work and nobody will have more than £1,000 a year (incidentally the rate at which his own services to the State are rewarded). As a matter of fact, very few people in Ireland to-day have anything like that income, most of one's friends and acquaintances living on overdrafts at the Bank, or on a system of exchange and barter with the local shop-keepers.

With taxation higher than it has ever been, and unemployment increasing every week; with farming in a bankrupt condition and trade at a stand-still, the way is not only paved for Communism, the door is already open—and Ireland is not a promising field for experiments of this kind. A people as conservative and as self-centred as the Irish have always proved themselves to be are not likely to adapt themselves readily to conditions of society where nobody is for himself and all are for

the State. Possibly the forces of disruption may be held in check for a time. All the might and power of the Church are directed against Communism. The danger may be exaggerated. The solution may be simpler than we think.

"All that's wanted is a little sense," as Dan remarked on a previous occasion of political upheaval. With some of that valuable quality much might yet be accomplished. Unfortunately it is one which is even rarer than snakes in Ireland.

Nobody but a fool would attempt to make prophetic utterances about a country which has been happily described as one in which the Impossible always occurs and the Inevitable never comes off. We are too near to events to see them in their right proportion, to foretell their effect on the future.

At the moment, undoubtedly, "things are a fright," as Mrs. Daly remarked when she first saw an aeroplane flying over her patch of oats in the middle of harvesting operations. "Even the reapers and the binders do be gone up into the sky. Lord save us! What next?"

All one can do while awaiting a solution of its problems is to hope for the best for one's country, forgetting its unhappy past, remembering with gratitude the many happy years one has spent in it, praying with the poet of another distracted land

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high ;  
Where knowledge is free ;  
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by  
narrow domestic walls ;  
Where words come out from the depth of truth ;  
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection ;  
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into  
the dreary desert sand of dead habit ;

Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening  
thought and action—  
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country  
awaken.

THE END



## INDEX

- Abbeville, 42  
 Abbey Theatre, 142, 182  
 Aberdeen, Marquis and Marchioness of, 91-3  
 Aberdeen, Marchioness of, 162, 163  
 A. E. (George Russell), 141  
 Aedh of Scelig, 66  
 Agathocles, 44  
 Albert Hall, 86  
 Albert Memorial, 7  
 Alcibiades, 44  
 Allingham, Wm., 78  
 America, 93, 122, 136, 243  
 "Anna Grace" ballad, 77  
*Annals of the Four Masters*, 66  
 Anuradapura (Ceylon), 250  
 Arabian Nights, 54  
 Ardfert, Dean of, 210  
 Ard-na-Sidhe, 73, 97 (building of), 145, 230, 249, 259  
 Artillery Mansions, 15, 16  
 Ashbourne, Lord, 9  
 Ashbourne Act, 10  
 Astaire, Adèle (Lady Charles Cavendish), 260  
 Atlantic Ocean, 64, 65  
 Autun, 42  
 Avignon, 40, 42  
  
 Ballincollig, 243  
 Ballyard, 64  
 Ballycartie, 215  
 Ballyheigue Castle, 64  
 Ballykissane, 221  
 Ballyseedy, 64  
 Banff (North America), 256  
*Banjo World*, 14, 22  
 Banna Strand, Kerry, 105  
 Barnes, Dr. (Bishop of Birmingham), 266  
 Barnewall, Charles, Capt., 71, 72  
 Barnewall, Mrs., 71  
 Barnewall, *see* Gordon, Ellen Lady  
 Barnewall, *see also* Trimlestown  
 Battle of Festubert, 102  
 — of the Four Courts, 201  
 — of Rue du Bois, 102  
 — of Somme and Marne, 175  
 — of Ypres, 99  
 Beaufort, 80  
 Beauvais, 42  
 Belfast, 85  
 Belgium, 97  
 Belgrave Square, 23  
 Bennett, Sir William, 72  
 Berlin, 102  
 Bernards, Morrogh, the, 10  
 Besant, Mrs. (Annie), 24  
 Bhopal, Begum of, 58  
 "Biddy Boys," 156  
 "Big Bertha," 189  
 Bismarck, 94  
 Bivona, 47  
 Black and Tans, 74, 153, 154, 155, 157, 158, 159, 160, 174, 175, 179, 192, 202, 216, 226, 238, 258  
 Blackrock College, 248  
 Black Watch, the, 137  
 Blackwater, river, 12, 13, 260  
 Bland family, 64  
 Blaskets, the, 202  
 "Blastus," 4, 5  
 Blathmhac of Scelig, 66  
 Blennerhassetts, the, 64, 99, 100  
 Blennerhassett, Mr., 197  
 Bolshevism, 141, 159, 183  
 Bombay, 51  
 Boulogne, 99, 100, 101  
 Bourn, Mr. (of California), 62  
 Bourn, Maud, *see* Vincent  
 Bow River Valley, 257  
 Bridewell, the, 161  
 Bridget Mary, *see* Templemore

- Brighton, 14, 71  
 Brisco, Mr., 24  
 Bristol, 12  
 Bronte, Duchy of, 49  
 Brussels, 8  
 "Butchart" Rock Garden, Victoria, 256  
 Bute, Marquess and Marchioness of, 51  
 Buttevant, 226
- Cahirciveen, 87, 173, 174, 222  
 Calabria, 43  
 Callinafercy, 3, 64  
 Campbell, Lady Colin, 17  
 Canada, 199, 257  
 Canadian Pacific Railway, 254  
 Caragh, 105, 117, 134, 135  
 Caragh Lake, 26, 61, 75  
 Carisbrooke, *see* Denison  
 Carlsbad, 245  
 "Carlton," Mrs., the story of, 157-61  
 Carnegie Hall, 87, 95, 238, 240  
 Carrantuohill, 26, 189  
 Carson, Sir Edward, 86, 88, 89  
 Carson's, Sir Edward, Covenant, 85  
 "Carsonites," 89, 94  
 Carthage, 44  
 Casement, Sir Roger, 105, 106, 144  
 Cassillis, Earl and Countess of, 51  
 Castlerosse, Lady, *see* Kenmare  
 Castlerosse, Lord, 258  
 Cavendish, Lord Charles, 260  
 Cavendish, Lord Frederick, 13  
 Ceylon, 249, 250  
 Charing Cross Road, 91  
 Chepstow, 93  
 Cheyne Walk, 73, 141  
 Childers, Erskine, 199  
 China, 250  
 Christian Science, 23  
 — Scientists, 72  
 "Christy Mahon," 114  
 Church Army, the, 24  
 Churchill, Lady Randolph, 143, 144  
 Churchill, Winston, 143  
 Chutes, the, 188  
 Clancy, the Widow, *see* Templemore
- Claridge's, 21, 22  
 Clive, Lord, 5  
 Collins, Michael, 195, 222, 223  
 Colombo, 249  
 Colombes, the, 64  
 Communism, 270  
 Conca d'Oro, 43  
 Concordia, 48  
 Connaught Place, 99  
 Connolly, 108  
 Connors, John, 80 *et seq.*  
 Cook, an English, 194-5  
 Cooks, Irish, 242-4  
 Cork, 41, 125, 153, 191, 212, 216, 223, 242, 244 (a cook from)  
 Cork, the great Earl of, 260  
*Cork Examiner*, 165, 193, 200, 205 (extract from), 212  
 Corleone, 45, 47  
 Corrane, Lough, 66  
*Countess Cathleen*, 108  
*Country Life*, 17, 20  
 Cowley, Abraham, 262  
 Cromwell, another, 185  
 Cromwellian descendants, 4, 186  
 Crosbie family, 64  
 Cumann-na-mBan, 133, 165  
 "Curragh Incident," 94  
 Curtin, Jeremiah, 78
- Dail, the, 153, 198, 247, 248  
*Daily Mail*, 85, 220  
 Daly, Mrs., 122, 123, 124, 148-51, 212-16, 270  
 Dan the gardener, *see* Moynihan  
 Danes, the, 69  
 Dante, 193  
 Day, Judge, 25  
 Delhi, 51, 57, 58, 60  
 Denison, Lady Irene (Marchioness of Carisbrooke), 51  
 Derryquin, 64  
 Desmond, Castle, 12  
 Desmond, Countess of, 12  
 de Valera, E., 199, 200, 219, 220, 248, 265, 269  
 Devlin, J., 94  
 Devonshire, Duke of, 13  
 Devonshire, Dukes of, 260  
 Dingle Bay, 3, 64, 79, 87, 113  
 Disraeli, 95, 124  
 Diyatalawa (Ceylon), 249  
 Dolosbage (Ceylon), 249

- Dromana, 11, 12, 13  
 Dromore, 64  
 Dromquinna, 64  
 Dublin, 4, 105, 107, 109, 135,  
     138 *et seq.*, 155, 157, 158,  
     161, 162, 163, 182, 183, 192,  
     199, 200, 202, 222, 224-6,  
     229, 230  
 "Dublin Evenings," 141  
 "Dublins," the, 104  
 Dudley, Lady, nursing scheme,  
     62  
 Dudley's, Lady, Hospital, 99, 100  
 Dundrum, 192  
 Dunraven, Earl of, 64, 99, 100,  
     101  
 Durbar, the, 50 *et seq.*  
  
 Eastbourne, 72  
 Easter Week Rebellion, 97, 105,  
     248  
 Edward, H.M. King, 22 ; coro-  
     nation of, 57 ; funeral, 182  
 Egmont, Lucy, Countess of, 24  
 Egypt, 12, 71, 72, 73  
 Eitgall, 66, 69  
 Elizabeth, Queen, 12  
 Emmett, 135  
 Empedocles, Port of, 47  
*Empress of Australia*, 253  
 England, 11, 28, 86, 95, 101, 106,  
     108, 119, 137, 152, 166, 175,  
     176, 184, 247  
 Englands, Hugh, the, 249  
 Escoffier family, 244  
 Etna, 48, 49  
 Euston, 142  
  
 Farranfore, 194  
 Farranfore-Cahirciveen Railway,  
     173  
 Fastnet Rock, 106  
 Ferguson, Sir Samuel, 77  
 Fermoy, 242  
 Fishguard to Rosslare boats,  
     61  
 Fitzgerald, Lord Edward, 135  
 Fitzgeralds, the Robert, 64  
 Fitzwilliam Place, Dublin, 141,  
     158, 161  
 Flanders, 176  
 Florence, 39  
 Folkestone, 72  
  
 Forbes's Canteen, Lady Angela,  
     100  
 France, 8, 39, 42, 97, 99, 100,  
     102, 182  
 Franco-German War, 94  
  
 Gaelic League, 249  
 Galle Face Hotel, Ceylon, 249  
 Garden-making, 34 *et seq.*, 110,  
     113  
 Garinish Island, 64  
 Geddes, Sam, 91  
 Germany, 8, 9, 22, 108, 124, 189  
 Giraldus Cambrensis, 66  
 Girgenti, 45, 46, 47, 48  
 Gisco, 44  
 Gladstone, Mr., 184  
 Glenbeigh, 74, 173  
 Glencairn Abbey, 13  
 Glencar, 31, 32, 33, 189  
 Godfrey, Sir John, 7  
 Godfrey, Lady, 7  
 Godfrey, Mabel, 11  
 Godfrey, Sir William, 64  
 Godfrey, Mary, 64  
 Gordon, Sir Home, 13, 14, 15, 39  
 Gordon, Sir Seton, of Embo, 14,  
     39  
 Gordon, Ellen Lady, 14, 71, 72,  
     219  
 Gough, General Sir (Hubert),  
     94  
 Granville Place, 71  
 Gravetye, 20  
 Great Southern and Western  
     Railway, 192, 194  
 Greece, 47  
 Greeks, 44  
 Green, Mrs. J. R., historian, 144,  
     145  
*Grianaig*, the yacht, 99, 100, 101  
 Griffiths, Arthur, 195, 222  
 Gwynn, Stephen, 269  
  
 Haldane, Professor, 169  
 — — *The Inequality of Man*,  
     168  
 Hamilton, Duke and Duchess of,  
     51  
 Hanafin and his cows, 78 *et seq.*  
 Hannah Maria, 246  
 Hannibal, 44  
 Hardinge, Lord, 53



- Harrington, Mr., 258  
 Harrison-Hughes, *see* Reynolds  
 Harrods, 60  
 Hartington, Lord, 13  
 Harvard, U.S.A., 182  
 Herbert family, 62  
 Herod, King, 5  
 "Hibernians, Ancient Order of,"  
     87  
 Higginson, Colonel, 249  
 Highland reels, 51  
 Hodson, Sir George, 64  
 Hodson, Meriel, 64  
 Holy Island, 17  
 Home Rule, 184  
 — — Act, 86  
 — — banners, 87  
 — — Bill promised, 89  
 — — circles, 91  
 Hong-Kong, 250  
 Hood family, 64  
 Horder, Morley, architect, 73,  
     87, 89, 98  
 House of Commons, 91, 149  
 Howth, 140  
 Hudson, Edward, 17, 20, 21, 42  
 Hurd, Percy, 16  
 Hyde Park (speeches), 86  
  
 India, 50 *et seq.*, 166  
 Indian Ocean, 51, 59  
 Ireland, *passim*  
 Irish Club, the, 91  
 — Republican Army (I.R.A.),  
     154, 155, 156, 175, 178, 180,  
     186, 196, 198, 200, 201, 210,  
     211, 214  
*Irish Times*, 135, 146, 147  
 Isle of Man, 118  
 Italy, 39 *et seq.*, 115, 191  
 Iveragh, 87, 167  
  
 Jammet's restaurant, 141  
 Japan, 250-2  
 Jekyll, Miss, 21  
  
 Kaiser, the, 254  
 Kandy, 250  
 Kauffmann, Angelica, 4  
 Keating's *History of Ireland*, 66  
 Kenmare Bay, 63, 214  
 Kenmare, Earl of, 61, 122, 229  
 Kenmare, Countess of, 62  
  
 Kensington Palace, 102  
 Keogh, Sir Alfred, 100  
 Kerry, 26 *et seq.* (building in);  
     61 *et seq.* (society in); 75 *et*  
     *seq.* (fairy lore of); 125 *et*  
     *seq.* (local customs); 157  
     (Christmas in); 163 *et seq.*  
     (attempts at hygiene in);  
     201, 210 *et seq.* (the Civil  
     War in); 259 (the new);  
     *et passim*  
 Kerry, Bishop of, 221  
 Kilcoleman Abbey, 64  
 Kildare Street Club, 158  
 Kilfane, 5, 6  
 Kilkenny Hunt founded, 5  
 — Private Theatre, 5  
 — — Book of, 6  
 Killaha Castle, 4  
 Killarney, 4, 10, 62, 63, 80, 83,  
     122, 174, 189, 198, 211, 216,  
     225, 227, 230, 242, 258  
 — House, 61, 62  
 — Infirmary, 164  
 Killorglin, 74, 95, 107, 124, 131,  
     148, 151, 154, 163, 164, 167,  
     174, 201, 219 (barracks  
     blown up), 222, 229  
 King, H.M. the, 52, 53, 57, 58,  
     200  
 Kissingen, 245  
 Kutch, Gulf of, 59  
 Kyoto (Japan), 251, 252  
  
*Ladies' Field*, 17  
 Lake Louise, 257  
 Lakeview, 63  
 Land League, 9, 11, 91  
 Leeson family, 4  
 Leeson-Marshall, Grace, 8  
 Leeson-Marshall, Mary, 8, *see*  
     *also* Godfrey  
 Leeson, Richard, 3  
 Leeson, Robert, 4  
     *See also* Marshall  
 Lenglen, Mlle, 215  
 Lennox, Lady Algernon Gordon,  
     100  
 Leslie, Lady, 145  
 Leslie, Shane, 145  
 Levinska, Polish medium, 143  
 Lewis, Sir George, 105  
 Lickeen, 177

- Liffey, River, 141  
 Limerick, 107, 126, 171, 199  
     (Mayor of), 205, 207  
 Limerick Junction, 192, 225  
 Lindisfarne, 17  
 Lindsay, Mrs., murder of, 155  
 Lismore, 6, 260  
 Lismore, Archdeacon of, *see*  
     Power, A.  
 Lismore Castle, 13, 260  
 "Lismore Estates Company,"  
     261  
 Listowel, 201  
 Lloyd George, 89, 93, 94  
 Lochlein, *see* O'Donohue  
 Loefflers, the, 101  
 Loire, Châteaux of, 40, 41  
 Londesborough, Earl and Coun-  
     tess of, 51  
 London, 50, 71, 97, 99, 101, 102,  
     111, 113, 130, 132, 141, 142,  
     144, 213, 267  
 — Conference, the, 194  
 — Library, 42  
 Louise, Lake, 256  
 Lourdes, 243  
 Lutyens, Sir Edwin, 17  
 Lutyens, Lady Emily, 24  
 Lyons, 42  
  
 McCartie, Mr., 211, 212  
 MacDonagh, 108  
 MacDonnell's parcel-packing  
     depot, Lady, 102  
 Macon, 42  
 Macroom, murder of Auxiliaries  
     at, 155  
 MacSwiney, Mary, 200  
 MacSwiney, Terence, 153  
 Madonian Mountains, 48  
 Magills, the, 197  
 Maguire, Mrs., 118, 119, 120  
 Mahaffy, Professor, 183  
 Maiano, 39  
 Mair, George, 95, 141, 142  
 Malahide, 140  
 Malcolmsons, the, 249  
 Mallow, 192, 193, 226, 230  
 Malocatha, R. M., 223  
*Maloja*, 50  
 Malone, "Brigadier-General,"  
     238  
*Manchester Guardian*, 142  
  
 Maple Bay (Vancouver Island),  
     256  
 Maria the parlourmaid, 235, 237  
 Marineo, 46  
 Markham family, 4  
 Marshall estates, 3  
 Marshall family, 4  
 Marshall, Markham Leeson, 5  
 Mary Bridget, *see* Templemore  
 Matania, F., 102  
 Maxwell's executions, Sir John,  
     107  
*Mayflower*, the, 222  
 Mellows, Irregular leader, 247  
 Melun, 42  
 Messiah, the new, 24  
 Messina, 50  
 Millstreet, 227  
 Milltown, Earl of, 4  
 Misilmeri, 45  
 Miyanoshita (Japan), 252  
 Monreale, 43  
 Monte Carlo, 42  
 Monte Pellegrino, 43  
*Morning Post*, 159  
 Moslems, 52  
 Mount Everest, 203  
 Moynihan, Mrs., 236, 237, 238,  
     240  
 Moynihan, Dan, 109, 110, 117,  
     118, 133, 200, 202, 220, 236,  
     240, 241, 271  
 Muckross, 62, 63  
 Munstead, 21  
 Munster, 12, 66  
 "Munsters," the, 64, 102, 105  
  
 Naples, 43  
 National Volunteers, 93, 95,  
     97  
 Nationalist Meeting, a, 85 *et*  
     *seq.*  
 — Party, the, 89, 152  
 Nawanagar, 51, 58  
 Nawanagar, "Ranji," Jam  
     Sahib of, 50 *et seq.*  
 Nelson (Admiral), 49  
 Newnes, 17, 18  
*News of the World*, 18  
 New York, 63, 259  
 Nikko (Japan), 252  
 Nile Valley, 72  
 Northumberland, 17

- Norway, 115  
 Nuwara Eliya (Ceylon), 249
- O'Brien, Pat, 87  
 O'Callaghan, Mrs., 199  
 O'Connell, Lady, 225, 229  
 O'Connell, Sir Morgan, 63  
 O'Connor, Rory, 247  
 O'Conorites, Rory, 199  
 O'Donnell, Tom, 91  
 O'Donoghue of the Glen, the, 4  
 O'Donohue, Daniel, King of  
   Lochlein (fairy chief), 83  
 Ollendorff manner, 53  
 Olympia, 24  
 Omar Khayyám, 48  
 O'Neill, Maire, 142  
 Oolagh, 115  
 Orangemen, 249  
 O'Sullivan, Mary, 244, 245  
 O'Sullivan, Mr., 74  
*Outlook, The*, 16  
 Ovington Square, 16, 73
- Palermo, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49  
 — Hotel des Palmes, 46, 48  
 Parnell, Charles, 10, 152, 184  
 Parthenon, 47  
 Pearce, 108  
 Peking, 250  
 Peradeniya Gardens (Ceylon),  
   250  
 Pigott conspiracy, 10  
*Playboy of the Western World*, 113  
 Plunkett, 108  
 Plunkett, Sir Horace, 162  
 Polanuruwa (Ceylon), 250  
 Portman Square, 71  
 Portsmouth Harbour, 250  
 Power, Ven. Ambrose, 5, 6  
 Power, Frances, 224  
 Power, Sir John, 5, 6  
 Power, Noël, *see* Windeyer  
 Power, Richard, 5  
 Power, Willie, 13  
 Priestley, Sir Arthur, 51  
 Prizzi, 47  
 Provence, 40, 47  
 Puck Fair, 124 *et seq.*  
 "Purdah ladies," 53
- Quebec, 256  
 Queen, H.M. the, 52, 53, 57, 58
- Queen Anne's Gate, 17  
 Queen's Hall, 22  
 Queenstown, 106  
 Quinlan, Michael, 169, 170, 172
- Ragusa, Signor, 46, 48  
 Raleigh, Sir Walter, 12  
 Randazzo, 49  
 "Ranji," *see* Nawanager  
 Rathgar, 141  
 Rathmore, 193, 194  
 Redmond, John, 86, 87, 88, 89,  
   94, 95, 99, 184  
 Redmond, Mrs., 89  
 Redmond, Major Willie, 102  
 Reich, Dr. Emil, 21, 22  
 Republic, the, 174, 197 (ex-  
   pectations of); 198, 248,  
   249, 266  
 Reynolds, Gertrude (Mrs. Har-  
   rison-Hughes), 39, 40  
 Riddell, Lord, 17, 18  
 Robinson, William, 20, 21  
 Rocky Mountains, 257  
 Rome, 47  
 Rosslare, 61, 193, 266  
 Royal Irish Constabulary  
   (R.I.C.), 10, 131, 154, 155  
 Russborough, 4  
 Russell, Charles, Hon., 39, 41,  
   42  
 Russell, George, *see* A. E.  
 Russell of Killowen, Lord, 39  
 Russia, 203  
 Ryan, Major Julian, 102
- St. Ambrose, 168  
 St. Brigid's Eve custom, 157  
 St. Finan the Leper, 66  
 St. Gervaise, 168  
 St. Michael, Church of, 66, 68  
 St. Patrick, 66  
 St. Protasus, 168  
 St. Stephen's Day custom, 156  
 Sankey and Moody hymns, 7  
 Scapa Flow, 115  
 "Scariveen" (North Wind), 109  
 Scotland, 39, 115, 202  
 Scott, Montagu, M.P., 71  
 See Fin, 31, 115  
 Segesta, 47  
 — Temple of, 44  
 Serpentine, the, 115

- Seychelles Islands, 115  
 Shanghai, 251  
 Shea, Patsy, 171, 172  
 Sicily, 42 *et seq.*  
 Sigiri, rock of (Ceylon), 250  
 Silenus, 44  
 Sinn Fein, 90, 132, 137, 150,  
     152, 153, 154, 175, 176, 183,  
     184  
 — Club, 74, 155  
 Sinn Feiners, 107, 135, 157,  
     174  
 Skelligs, Greater and Small, 64 *et*  
     *seq.* See also Blathmac, and  
     Aedh  
 Slieve Mish range, 26  
 Sloane Square, school of needle-  
     work, 102  
 Smith, Dr., *History of Kerry*, 66  
 Southampton dock, 99  
 — Water, 99  
 Southern Unionist Alliance,  
     148  
 Stephen's Green, Dublin, 140,  
     144  
 Stephens, James, 141, 143, 144  
 Stevenson, R. L., 194  
 Stokes, "Bess," 25  
 Stuart, Harry, 13  
 Stuart, Henry Villiers, 11  
 Stuart, Mary Villiers, 11  
 Suffragettes, 55  
 Sweeny, Mrs., 236, 237, 238  
 Swinburne, A. C., xi, 104  
 Switzerland, 115  
 Synge (J. M.), 182, 183  
 Syracuse, 45, 48  
  
 Tagore, Rabindranath, 177  
 Taj Mahal Hotel, 51  
 Taormina, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49,  
     50  
 Targa-Florio course, 48  
 Templemore, "bleeding" statue  
     at, 167-72  
 Termini, 48  
 Thames, the, 260  
 Thomas, Mr. J. H., 265  
 Thoreau, on living alone, 113  
*Times, The*, 10, 204  
 Tipperary, Co., 5  
 Tipping, Mr. Avray, 93  
  
 Tokio, 253  
 Tone, Wolfe, 135  
 Tottenham Court Road style,  
     53  
 Tralee, 7, 137, 214, 219  
 — Barracks, 64, 244  
 — Bay, 106  
 Treaty, the, 199, 247, 248  
 Trimlestown, Lord, 72  
 Trinity College, Dublin, 182,  
     183  
 Tuatha-de-danaan (mythical in-  
     habitants of Ireland), 75,  
     259  
 Tullamaine Castle, 5  
  
 Ulster, 88, 89, 93, 228  
  
 Valentia Island, 64, 74, 107  
 Vancouver Island, 253  
 Versailles, 42  
 Victoria, Queen, 106, 124  
 Victoria (British Columbia), 255  
 Victoria Street, 16  
 Villiers Stuart, *see* Stuart  
 Vincent, Arthur, 62  
 Vincent, Maud, 62, 63  
  
 Wade, Sir Willoughby and Lady,  
     39  
 Walpole, Horace, 4  
 Walpole Street, 141  
 Warden, Colonel, 64  
 War Office, 104  
*Wars of the Danes*, 66  
 Waterford City, 207  
 Waterford, Co., 203, 260  
 Waterloo, 99  
 Watts Dunton, Mr., xi  
 Western front, 104  
 Westmorland slates, 74, 97  
 Wicklow, Co., 4  
 — Mountains, 140  
 Wilmot, Sir Charles, 4  
 Wimborne, Lord and Lady,  
     93  
 Windeyer, Mrs., 250, 256  
 Woman Movement, 55  
 — Suffrage, 23  
 "Women and Childers" party,  
     200

- Women's National Health As-      Yeats, W. B., 108, 141, 142, 182,  
     sociation, 95, 162, 164              183  
 " Wren boys," 156              Yokohama, 253, 255  
 Wright, C. Hagberg, 42              Youghal, 12  
 Wyndham (George), Act, 9,  
     184              Zoo (Nawanagar), 59





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